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GREEK CULTURE AND THE GREEK TESTAMENT

The Heights of Christian Love

A STUDY OF

First Corinthians Thirteen

By

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PART ONE

CLIMBING THE TRAIL

CLIMBING THE TRAIL

I. The Highest Height

The Yosemite Valley in California is one of nature's wonderlands. Take any trail you choose and it will lead you into marvelous displays of natural beauty and far-reaching vision. We stood upon Glacier Point, three thousand two hundred and fifty feet above the valley floor, and looked down upon the great hotels which seemed like doll houses and the men and women who walked about them like moving specks, and then we looked away to the Vernal and Nevada Falls and on to the crest of the Sierras through a sweep of forty miles; and we were ready to say, "Nothing could be more impressive than this."

On another day we climbed to the top of Eagle Peak on the opposite side of the valley, five hundred feet higher into the air, and we found that the view from that point was wider and grander still. On yet another day we toiled up the trail which led us past the Vernal Falls and the Nevada Falls and round

the Cap of Liberty through the Little Yosemite past South Dome to the towering peak they called Cloud's Rest, six thousand feet above the valley, ten thousand feet above the sea, the highest accessible point in that region, and there we found what was possibly the finest panoramic view with the most far-reaching and varied and striking topographical outlook to be seen anywhere in the mountains of America.

To the earnest student of Scripture the Epistles of Paul are a wonderland, filled with marvels of literary beauty and spiritual power. Anyone who follows their guidance will be led again and again into mountain heights of marvelous vision, where spiritual horizons will be like unto that at Glacier Point or Eagle Peak or Cloud's Rest in Yosemite; and again and again one will be tempted to say, "This is the highest height of exaltation to which even such a giant genius as that of Paul can lead me, for nothing can be more impressive and sublime than this." The eighth chapter of Romans, the first chapter of Ephesians, the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians—these are like Glacier Point or Eagle Peak or Sentinel Dome; but almost all the authorities and lovers of the Scripture are agreed that there is one passage which towers

above all the rest, the highest reach of the apostle's genius, the highest peak in the Pauline Epistles. That highest height of the apostle's inspiration is to be found in the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

Dean Alford said of this chapter that it was a pure and perfect gem, perhaps the noblest assemblage of beautiful thoughts in beautiful language extant in this our world; and a recent writer declares of it that it is beyond question the noblest statement of all that a Christian man ought to be and do and suffer, that has ever been penned. Other passages in the Pauline Epistles may be very precious to us; but if we would enjoy the very best which Paul has to offer us, we must read and study, appropriate and absorb until it becomes a very part of our being, the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to Corinth. Paul never wrote anything else to equal it. This chapter is the brightest gem among all his treasures, the fairest flower to be plucked in his garden, the highest mountain peak to which even his daring spirit could ascend. Shall we endeavor to climb this trail by his side? Let us first notice one curious fact concerning this chapter. It is merely an aside, a parenthesis.

II. A Parenthesis

Paul is writing to the Corinthians about the spiritual gifts which God had bestowed upon them. There were marvelous charisms in their church, gifts of healing, working of miracles, discerning of spirits, eloquence of prophecy, diversities of tongues, interpretations of tongues. In the twelfth chapter the apostle makes a general presentation of the subject, emphasizing especially the diversity and the varying value among these gifts, while he endeavors to show that they all have one source and therefore ought to work toward one end. In the fourteenth chapter Paul proceeds to a discussion of particular gifts, and especially the gift of tongues. Between the twelfth and the fourteenth chapters he interrupts himself to say, "I will show you a more excellent way." Then he makes of the thirteenth chapter a pæan of praise to perfect love. The chapter is a parenthesis, but it is greater than other men's volumes. The Faith Chapter of the New Testament is another parenthesis. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews, which sings the triumphs of faith, is an interruption of the author's argument, an insertion by the way, and yet the most precious chapter of the entire Epistle to us. It is just so with the thirteenth

chapter of First Corinthians. It is an aside, an insertion, a parenthesis, but we would not exchange it for any other chapter written by Paul.

III. The Subject, Love

The chapter is a poem in praise of Christian love. We would have expected it to be written by the apostle John. John is the Apostle of Love in the New Testament. He was the beloved disciple among the twelve. The Epistles of John are love letters, filled with exhortations to and protestations of love. We would have expected John to compose a poem to Christian love; but it is one of the paradoxes of church history that it was not John but Paul to whom the privilege was granted of writing the most glorious presentation of love to be found in the Bible or in the world's literature.

Paul is called the Apostle of Faith, but it is he who writes, "The greatest of these is love."[1] John is called the Apostle of Love, but he wrote the fourth Gospel and said at the end of it, "These things are written that ye may believe"[2]—not that ye may love but "that ye may believe." The Apostle of Love writes

[1] 1 Cor. 13. 13.
[2] John 20. 31.

the gospel for Faith. The Apostle of Faith writes the incomparable Eulogy of Love.

Paul was not much given to poetry. He was a lawyer by instinct, a logician in practice, a prince among executives, a man of action, no dreamer or rhapsodist. Yet here for a moment his pen is poetically inspired and he rises into the transcendent heights, and with illimitable spiritual vision he describes the queen of Christian graces, and on the most sublime summit of Christian attainment on earth and in heaven he plants the religious ideal of the New Testament revelation, charity or Christian love. He shows that the love involved alone can give any value to all the spiritual gifts in their personal possession or their public manifestation, and that love has eternal worth, while all these things will pass away. He shows that love is the primal necessity and the eternal necessity as well in the Christian life. It is the incomparable gift, the most excellent way.

Paul puts into his description of it all gracious attributes, all lovable traits, and yet seems scarcely satisfied. Many writers have made the same attempt worthily to describe this chief of all the graces, and have felt their own inadequacy. Let us look at a few of these, before we continue our study.

IV. Other Descriptions of Love

1. Five hundred years before Paul's day Plato had essayed to sing the praises of love. It may be that Paul had read his words and thought that he could improve upon them. "From the love of the beautiful," Plato said, "has sprung every good in heaven and earth. Therefore I say of Love, that he is the cause of what is fairest and best in all things. . . . Love is our lord, supplying kindness and banishing unkindness, giving friendship and forgiving enmity, the joy of the good, the wonder of the wise, the amazement of the gods; desired by those who have no part in him, and precious to those who have the better part in him; parent of delicacy, luxury, desire, fondness, softness, grace; regardful of the good, regardless of the evil; in every word, work, wish, fear—pilot, helper, defender, saviour; glory of gods and men, leader best and brightest; in whose footsteps let every man follow, chanting a hymn of praise and joining in that fair strain with which Love charms the souls of gods and men."

2. Chrysostom, the most eloquent of the church Fathers, discourses upon Love in the following fashion: "Consider how great a blessing it is of itself to exercise love; what

cheerfulness it produces, in how great grace it establishes the soul!—a thing which above all is a choice quality of it. For the other parts of virtue have each their trouble yoked with them. But love, along with the gain, hath great pleasure too, and no trouble—and, like an industrious bee gathering the sweets from every flower, deposits them in the soul of him who loveth. Though anyone be a slave, it renders slavery sweeter than liberty—for he who loveth rejoiceth not so much in commanding as in being commanded—although to command is sweet: but Love changes the nature of things, and presents herself with all blessings in her hands, gentler than any mother, wealthier than any queen, and makes difficulties light and easy, making out virtue to be facile, but vice very bitter to us. As thus: to expend seems grievous, yet Love makes it pleasant; to receive other men's goods, pleasant, yet Love suffers it not to appear pleasant, but frames our minds to avoid it as evil. Again, to speak evil seems to be pleasant to all; but Love, while making this out to be bitter, causeth speaking well to be pleasant; for nothing is so sweet to us as to be praising one whom we love. Again, anger hath a kind of pleasure: but in this case no longer; rather all its sinews are taken away; . . . so far is

Love from being exasperated. And should Love behold one in error, Love mourns and is in pain; yet even this pain itself brings pleasure. . . . But there is, saith one, a profane pleasure in love. Avaunt! and hold thy peace, whoever thou art! For nothing is so pure from such pleasure as genuine love. Love considers the profit of them that are loved."

3. Thomas à Kempis, the greatest of the medieval mystics, in his *Imitation of Christ* has a chapter on "The Wonderful Effect of Divine Love," in which are these paragraphs descriptive of the graces of Love.

"Love is a great thing,
A blessing very good,
The only thing that makes all burdens light,
Bearing evenly what is uneven,
Carrying a weight, not feeling it,
Turning all bitterness to a sweet savor.
The noble love of Jesus drives men on to do great deeds,
And always rouses them to long for what is better.

"Nothing is sweeter, stronger, broader, higher,
Fuller, better, or more pleasant in heaven or earth;
It is the child of God,
Nor can it rest except in him,
Above the world created.

"It feels no weight,
Makes light of toil,
Would do more than it can,

Pleads no impossibility,
Because it thinks it can and may do all.

"Love is swift, sincere,
Pious, pleasant, and delightsome,
Brave, patient, faithful,
Careful, longsuffering, manly,
Never seeking its own good;
For where a man looks for himself
He falls away from love."

Of course these descriptions by Thomas à Kempis and Chrysostom are modeled more or less upon the one by Paul. The same thing is true of the one which comes nearest to Paul in time in Christian literature.

4. One of Paul's fellow laborers at Philippi was a man called Clement, whose name the apostle says was written in the book of life.[1] After Paul's martyrdom and while the apostle John was still living in his old age at Ephesus, church tradition says that this Clement, as the friend and companion of both Peter and Paul, was chosen to stand at the head of the Christian church at Rome. Whether Clement of Rome was the Clement of the Philippian epistle or not, we know that in his capacity of presbyter or bishop of the Roman church he wrote an epistle to the Corinthians, probably about the year 95 of our era. For some centuries this epistle was read in many of the

[1] Phil. 4. 3.

churches as almost if not quite on a level with the apostolical and canonical writings themselves. The forty-ninth chapter of that epistle is a chapter in praise of Christian love, and it has many points of resemblance to the chapter written by Paul. Clement, even more than Paul, seems to be overcome by his sense of the impossibility of doing anything like adequate justice to his theme.

He says: "Who can describe the blessed bond of the love of God? What man is able to tell the excellence of its beauty, as it ought to be told? The height to which love exalts is unspeakable. Love unites us to God. Love covers a multitude of sins. Love beareth all things, is long-suffering in all things. There is nothing base, nothing arrogant in love. Love admits of no schisms: love gives rise to no seditions: love does all things in harmony. By love have all the elect of God been made perfect; without love nothing is well pleasing to God. In love has the Lord taken us to himself. On account of the love he bore us, Jesus Christ our Lord gave his blood for us by the will of God; his flesh for our flesh, and his soul for our souls. Ye see, beloved, how great and wonderful a thing is love, and that there is no declaring its perfections."

Clement was right. The half never yet has

been told of love's sublimity. Irenæus, one of the church Fathers, declared of love that "it is a most excellent present from heaven, the top and zenith of all virtues, gifts, and powers of God." It is all that, and more. The love of God is indescribable, inexhaustible, infinite. The love of Christ was greater love than this world ever had known or than men ever will realize. This love of God and love of Christ as cherished in a human heart and incarnated in a human life has beauties and nobilities in it which no human pen adequately can describe. Yet Paul has essayed to hint at certain unfailing characteristics which love has. We turn next to an analysis of his description.

V. Analysis of Paul's Description

The description proper is found in verses four to seven inclusive. Findlay tells us that these verses run in seven couplets, arranged as one affirmative, four negative, and then two more affirmative verse lines, with the subject repeated at the head of the second line. The verse which closes the middle longer movement becomes a triplet, making a pause in the chant by the antithetical repetition of the second clause. The paragraph then reads as follows:

Love suffers long, shows kindness.
Love envies not, makes no self-display;
Is not puffed up, behaves not unseemly;
Seeks not her own advantage, is not embittered;
Imputes not evil, rejoices not at wrong, but shares in the joy of the truth.
All things she tolerates, all things she believes;
All things she hopes for, all things she endures.

Findlay says further that the first line supplies the general theme, defining the two fundamental excellencies of Love—her patience toward evil and kindly activity in good. In the negative movement, the first half-lines set forth Love's attitude—free from jealousy, arrogance, avarice, grudge-bearing; while the second member in each case sets forth her temper—modest, refined in feeling, placable, having her joy in goodness. The third movement reverts to the opening note, on which it descants. We are not sure that Paul consciously adopted any metrical movements at this point, but all impassioned prose writing tends to adopt poetical forms, and we already have called this chapter Paul's sublime poem in praise of Christian love.

VI. The Simplicity of the Chapter

The sublimity of the chapter is most apparent in its simplicity. Anyone can understand it, and anyone can appreciate it to the full. It is a fact, as John Wesley suggests, that it immediately commends itself to every man's conscience, and nothing is more common than to find even those who deny the authority of the Holy Scriptures, yet affirming, "This is my religion; that which is described in the thirteenth chapter of the Corinthians." He tells us of a Jew, a physician living in Georgia, who used to say with great earnestness: "Paul of Tarsus is one of the finest writers I have ever read. I wish the thirteenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians were written in letters of gold. And I wish every Jew were to carry it with him wherever he went." And then John Wesley adds, "He judged (and herein he judged rightly), that this single chapter contained the whole of true religion. It contains whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely: if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, it is all contained in this."

VII. The Greatness of the Theme

It is a beautiful chapter and a wonderful chapter, one of the most precious to be found in the Book. We ought to study it carefully, prayerfully, until we have mastered its meaning and are prepared to realize its possibilities. It may take time and toil. It may be like climbing a mountain trail to Cloud's Rest; but Paul will lead us at last to a height of spiritual attainment and exaltation in which we may be made perfect in love.

Lesser attainments are necessary, other things are desirable, we may stand on other mountain peaks and have our souls filled with wonder and silent admiration, but Paul takes us by the hand and says, "Covet earnestly the best gifts; come, I will show you a more excellent way." Then he leads us into the heights of this thirteenth chapter. From peak to peak we ascend, past the heights of eloquence, prophecy, faith, world-wide benevolence; and then as the winding path leads us up and up the central crest and we pass from one point of view to another we see Love's patience, kindness, humility, courtesy, unselfishness, divinity and eternity; and when at last we stand on the broad tableland of the summit we see above us the cloudless heaven, around us

the limitless horizon, beneath us all the lower heights through which we climbed, and, looking down on all that lies below, we see and know that Paul speaks the truth when he says, "The greatest of these is love."

Rowland Hill once said, "Cultivate a spirit of love. Love is the diamond amongst the jewels of the believer's breastplate. The other graces shine like the precious stones of nature, with their own peculiar luster and various hues, but the diamond is white. Now, in white all the colors are united; so in love is centered every other grace and virtue. Love is the fulfilling of the law." Jeremy Taylor held an equally high estimate of love's value. He said: "Love is the greatest thing that God can give us, for himself is love. And it is the greatest thing we can give to God, for it will also give ourselves, and carry with it all that is ours." Faith is a mighty force; "hope springs eternal in the human breast," but love is the greatest of these graces of the soul.

VIII. Love Greater Than Other Graces

Paul begins this wonderful chapter by showing that this is true, first of all, in a comparison of love with other splendid gifts and in their contrast proving love more excellent than they.

1. Eloquence. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, though I have all the gifts of eloquence which ever graced the tribune or made the prophet a power, though I could preach till people cried and groaned and laughed and shouted and forgot themselves under the spell of my oratory, though I had all the genius of the old poets and philosophers and masters of style, of Isocrates, Æschines, Demosthenes, of Amos or Isaiah, though hearts were moved and lives were bettered and souls were saved under every sermon, and yet I had not love, I would be but sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. I would rather be a stammerer and a stutterer, I would rather be dumb all my days, and have my soul filled to overflowing with Christian love, than to be the most eloquent preacher of the new faith, preaching for fame or for a salary and without any personal experience of Christ's love in my heart. Eloquence is desirable, but empty eloquence is no better than a tinkling cymbal or a tin pan which, hollow and dead, knows nothing of the sound it may give out; while Christ's love shed abroad in the heart, the personal knowledge of salvation, wings the preacher's words with fire, puts behind the sound a soul. Love is greater than eloquence."

In all probability when Paul said that love was greater than the "tongues" of angels or men he had in mind the gift of tongues which was one of the charisms most prized in the Corinthian church. The tongues in Corinth needed interpretation. They seemed to the uninitiate a mere jumble or jargon of sounds. They evidently were not any known tongues of men; so those who exercised them claimed that they were the tongues of angels. It was celestial speech with which they were gifted, they said; but it surely did not suggest the harmony of heaven. When many were speaking at once they produced a discord like that of a blacksmith shop or a metal-worker's establishment, filled with sounding brass and clanging cymbals.

The cymbal is a shallow disc, capable of making only a harsh and clanging sound. It cannot vary its tone in order to get into harmony with any other instruments in an orchestra; but it can make itself heard in any din and it can drown out other sounds with its clanging. Paul makes it a symbol of the hollow and shallow and pretentious loud talker who is noisy enough to drown out all opposition but who is all sound and fury, signifying nothing.

The Corinthians esteemed the gift of

tongues very highly. They thought it was pure gold. Paul suggests that it is only sounding brass. Did they think they were Chrysostoms? They were not men of "golden mouths" but simply men of brazen throats. They might be very fluent and very loud, but they might have very little to say and no very good reason for saying it. It took patience and mental discipline and hard work to say things worth saying; but the gift of tongues fell upon those who were nervously unbalanced and who easily passed into an ecstatic state for the purpose of receiving it. It made its possessors prominent in the church and ministered to their vanity, since they thought themselves superior to all without the gift; and if in consequence they became arrogant and self-assertive, they might display their pride and their gift and they might attempt to outtalk and outshine their brothers, but their babble and their prattle would only give others the headache, and their assertion of superiority would only give others the heartache. It would be as nothing without love.

A preacher to-day may preach like an angel, but if he displays bad temper or pride it all goes for naught with those who hear. Excellency of speech and of wisdom are as nothing in comparison with the excellencies

of love. Paul proceeds, "Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, and have not love, I am nothing."

2. Prophecy. There have been wonderful prophets in all history—weather prophets, war prophets, prophets of good and prophets of evil, men who have prophesied truly, men who have seemed to possess a spirit of real prophecy, who nevertheless have been utterly devoid of the spirit of Christ. John Wesley tells us of a man who prophesied the overthrow of dynasties and royal lines, unexpected and unforeseen tempests and battles and accidents, and whose prophecies came strangely true. The story is so interesting that we will give it place here.

Wesley says: "A little before the conclusion of the late war in Flanders, one who came from thence gave us a very strange relation. I knew not what judgment to form of this; but waited till John Haime should come over, of whose veracity I could no more doubt than of his understanding. The account he gave was this:

" 'Jonathan Pyrah was a member of our society in Flanders. I knew him some years, and knew him to be a man of unblamable character. One day he was summoned to appear

before the board of general officers. One of them said: What is this that we hear of you? We hear that you are turned prophet, and that you foretell the downfall of the bloody house of Bourbon, and the haughty house of Austria. We should be glad if you were a real prophet, and if your prophecies came true. But what sign do you give, to convince us you are so; and that your predictions will come to pass? He readily answered: Gentlemen, I give you a sign: to-morrow at twelve o'clock, you shall have such a storm of thunder and lightning, as you never had before since you came into Flanders. I give you a second sign: as little as any of you expect any such thing, as little appearance of it as there is now, you shall have a general engagement with the French within three days. I give you a third sign: I shall be ordered to advance in the first line. If I am a false prophet, I shall be shot dead at the first discharge. But if I am a true prophet, I shall only receive a musket ball in the calf of my left leg.

"'At twelve the next day there was such thunder and lightning as they never had before in Flanders. On the third day, contrary to all expectation, was the general battle of Fontenoy. He was ordered to advance in the first line; and at the very first discharge he

did receive a musket ball in the calf of his left leg.' "

Wesley adds: "All this profited him nothing, either for temporal or eternal happiness. . . . It quite turned his brain. In a little time he ran stark mad. And so he continued to the day of his death."

Balaam, the son of Beor, had a gift of true prophecy; but he was a lover of gold more than of God, and he was slain by the sword of Israel.

3. Knowledge. There have been men who understood all mysteries and all knowledge, men of marvelous attainments in the sciences and arts, men who in their study of created things have lost all sight of the creating God; and Paul says they are as nothing in comparison. Voltaire may have known more than most men; but it were better to be the most humble Christian on the continent of Europe than to have been Voltaire at the height of his fame. "If a choice were necessary between the two, I would rather have Christian love than encyclopedic knowledge, or prophetic insight, or the understanding of all mysteries." That is what we understand Paul to say at this point.

The highest knowledge is impossible without love. Jean Ingelow says rightly,

"Learn that to love is the one way to know
Or God or man. It is not love received
That maketh man to know the inner life
Of them that love him; his own love bestowed
Shall do it."

4. Faith. Paul leads us one step further. "If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." Here is one of the surprises of this chapter. If a higher critic had discovered this passage and knew only that it had come from the New Testament but nothing at all about its context, he surely would have said: "This sentence must have been written by the apostle John, for he was the apostle of love among the New Testament writers; and it probably was written as a protest against the apostle Paul's overemphasis upon the value of faith. As a rebuke to Paul, John asserts that if he or any man has faith enough to remove mountains but has not love, he counts for nothing in Christian experience or the Christian Church." Such a higher critic might found a whole new school of theological views upon this opposition and antagonism between the two apostles Paul and John, even as the Tübingen School was founded upon the supposed antagonism between Peter and Paul. How surprising it would be to such a critic to find that this sentence had been written by Paul himself!

It is the Apostle of Faith who says that faith is as nothing in comparison with love, and even the greatest faith which removes mountains is valueless without love. The Jews called certain of their rabbis "removers of mountains" because of their great skill in removing mountains of obscurity and difficulty in their interpretations of the Scripture. Jesus had taken that title and applied it not to men of great learning and profound scholarship but to men of great faith in God who might see difficulties overcome and the impossible accomplished because they believed that they received their petitions when they prayed. Now Paul, recalling the title which he had heard in Gamaliel's school and the Lord's application of it to men of faith, makes this most astonishing statement that mountain-removing faith, like mountain-removing scholarship, is null and void without the saving grace of love.

Does faith save? No; only faith working by love. Does adherence to a creed guarantee salvation? No; there must be conduct consonant with the creed. Does orthodoxy avail to keep a man in the Kingdom? No; even devils believe and tremble, knowing that loveless orthodoxy has no power to save. Men have fought like devils to put an end to war,

and they have hated each other and hurt each other and persecuted and killed their brethren in the name of the God of love and the Prince of Peace. They seemed to do it in all sincerity. They verily believed that they were doing God's service, even as Paul had believed that he was the servant of God in persecuting the Christian Church. Paul knew better when he wrote this letter. He knew then that dogmatism and cruelty and persecution and murder might prove one's faithfulness to one's faith or creed, but it at the same time proved one's unfaithfulness to the first and great commandment of God and the primary principle of the Christian Church. Without love, faith can become fiendish.

Has history any better example than that of King Philip II of Spain? He was a sincere man. He had great faith in his Catholicism. He believed that he was doing God's service in persecuting the Protestant Church. He removed mountains of opposition and made whole districts and lands level with his own conception of what was proper and allowable in religious belief. When Don Carlos, his son, was accused of a crime, the father declared that he would be like Abraham in his obedience to the Lord. He said, "I have chosen in this matter to make the sacrifice to

God of my own flesh and blood, and to prefer his service and the universal welfare to all other human considerations." He was very strict in all his religious observances and as faithful as any monk in the performance of his religious duties. Yet when he heard of the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day in France he was transported with joy, and we are told that he "seemed more delighted than with all the good fortune or happy incidents which had before occurred to him." He was the very embodiment of faith, and he was a fiend in human form. He was as orthodox as any man in Europe, and he was as great a villain as ever sat upon a throne. He was an extreme example of the ferocity of loveless faith; but there have been many others less conspicuous than he who have had the same spirit in like or less degree.

They have been furiously orthodox and with fire and sword they have set about the task of bringing others to the level of their own faith. With relentless energy they have removed the mountains which lay in their way and they have piled them upon the heads of all who ventured to think differently from themselves; and if they have crushed out some lives in the process and even if the mountains have become mountain monuments over a

myriad dead they have rejoiced in the triumph of their faith, though it be through the loss of their love.

Let all the narrow and intolerant persecutors for the faith hear what Paul has to say at this point: "Your zeal may work wonders. It may remove mountains; but across all the level plains of your making there shines the clear sunlight of God's truth that hate does not come forth from his heart and that murder is not according to his will, and that love, and love alone, represents him and his throne. All your labor as long as it is without love or contrary to love is without him and contrary to him. It avails nothing as far as his favor is concerned. When you come to stand before his judgment seat you will not be asked whether you believed this or that and whether you fought valiantly for your faith. You will be asked only whether your lives were filled with works of mercy and love. Did you love God and did you love your brothers? If you did not, your faith will avail you nothing before him. Even though it be miracle-working, mountain-removing faith, it is nothing without love."

Judas Iscariot as one of the twelve apostles went out on that first mission, and he did many wonderful works with the others. The

sick were healed, the lepers were cleansed, the dead were raised, the devils were cast out, mountains of prejudice were removed, mountains of difficulty were overcome, the way was prepared for the kingdom of heaven; and yet he came back from that mission Judas Iscariot still. In the end it seemed that he would rather have thirty pieces of silver than thirty years of such Messianic ministry. He lacked in love for his Master and for his fellow men.

James and John loved the Master, and they were indignant when the Samaritans proved inhospitable to him; and they asked permission to call down fire from heaven upon the Samaritan village to destroy it. Jesus told them they did not know of what spirit they were. It might be a spirit of faith, certain of the power which could work a punitive miracle; but it was not a spirit of love. They had faith enough to believe that Jesus was able to do it; they did not have love enough to know that he never would think of doing it.

In the Great Sermon Jesus declared: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we do not cast out demons? and in thy name do many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity."[1] It may be that

[1] Matt. 7. 22, 23.

many a modern pastor and evangelist is satisfying his own conscience with the fact that he is successful in making converts and building up the membership of the church, even while he knows that he is selfish at heart and far from Christlike in his personal and private life. Any degree of success in wonder-working is no guarantee of personal salvation. A faith which removes mountains may be devoid of the saving grace of perfect love. Any amount of Fundamentalist fervor may be compatible with a woeful lack of brotherly affection in the bonds of peace.

5. Charity. Paul leads us higher by another step. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." A man may be a world-famed philanthropist, he may found great benevolent institutions, hospitals, asylums, and universities; and if in his benevolence he simply is building his own monument and burning incense to his own name, all of it will be unacceptable to God. If the money with which he does these things is blood money, tainted money, money gotten by unfair methods, by forcing all competitors out of the field or by sweating his employees, or money gained by unrighteous occupations, manufacturing war munitions or whisky or

the implements of vice, his philanthropies are doubly unacceptable to God.

We are told that Jesus looked upon the rich young man and loved him. If the rich young man had looked upon Jesus and loved him, he would have been accepted as a disciple at once; but he wanted to inherit the kingdom by obeying the other commandments and leaving out the primary love to God which would eventuate in genuine love for man. Jesus gave him the test of wholesale philanthropy just to show him that he lacked in the love which would make it possible and give it any value in the sight of God. Had the young man sold all he had and given his great possessions to the poor, that would not have saved him. That was only half of the Master's command to him. It still would have been necessary to prove that his philanthropy was rightly motived by a hearty and unhesitating following of Jesus in the devotion of love.

There is so much giving which does not have the right motive. Tammany Hall is said to be a great charitable institution; but when its politicians take care of the poor they do it partly or principally to maintain a political party, to court popularity, and to capture votes. There are Welfare Departments in connection with great corporations which

have many philanthropic and benevolent features and which cost the proprietors a great deal of money; but they sometimes lie under the suspicion that they are maintained at great expense simply to keep the working people contented with the manifest injustice and inequalities of their lot in their industrial dependence and to pacify the rising tide of discontent in their ranks.

A man may give to a beggar just to be rid of his importunity, or to a civic or church enterprise just because others are giving and it would be something of a disgrace to be left off the subscription list; and he may give generously because of the reputation it will give him in the community. There is a great deal of sounding of trumpets in connection with almsgiving in our day as well as in the days of the Lord. Charity bazaars and charity balls and charity circuses too often minister more to personal vanity and social frivolities than to any real sympathy with a brother's need.

Paul was taking up a collection for the needy Jews in Jerusalem and he was asking the Corinthians to subscribe and to give liberally to that end, but he warns them at the same time that the only constraining motive in their giving ought to be the motive of Christian love. They might give twice as much as

Zaccheus gave and as much as Jesus asked the young ruler to give and be no better off as far as their standing in the Kingdom was concerned, if they gave without love.

6. Martyrdom. Paul presses on to the heights. He says, "Though I give my body to be burned, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." Is it possible that a man would suffer martyrdom for any other reason than uncalculating devotion to the right and the good? Could a man go to the stake and cherish hatred on the way? There is that old story in the early ages of church history of the presbyter who was on the way to his death as a confessor of the faith, and to whom another Christian came with whom he had quarreled and the brother Christian asked for his forgiveness before he died. The presbyter refused to listen to his earnest pleading. We are not surprised therefore to read that when they came to the place of execution the unforgiving presbyter faltered and finally denied the Lord while the other who had been asking forgiveness in vain took his place. He could face death without flinching. He could go into the Master's presence with the palms of martyrdom and with the assurance of his perfect love. Martyrdom without love would not admit to heaven.

There might be such a thing as martyrdom because of self-love. Strabo tells us of Zarmanochegas, a Hindu who had himself burned at Athens during the reign of Augustus; and then a magnificent tomb was erected over his ashes with a pompous inscription upon it to the effect that he had immortalized himself. He had immolated himself, in the hope that he might immortalize himself in that ostentatious way. Paul says that he was profited nothing by this extremity of self-sacrifice in extreme self-exaltation.

Paul had read the inscriptions on various monuments in Athens and he doubtless had read this one: "Here lies Zarmanochegas, the Indian from Bargosa, who after the fashion of his Indian forefathers made himself immortal." This man was a devotee and fanatic who had made a public display of his zeal for his religion, and after advertisement of his purpose and in the presence of a vast multitude of people and with a smile upon his face had leaped into the flames of the funeral pyre. The affair had made quite an impression throughout the Roman Empire, and Josephus tells us that one of the Jewish outlaws, when his band was hard pressed by the Romans, exhorted them to self-destruction according to the example of Zarmanochegas.

Many applauded at the time and the name and fame of Zarmanochegas were carried from end to end of the Empire and made their way into the pages of Strabo and Josephus. We recall them to-day. In a sense the Hindu fakir has become immortal, but he is remembered as a fanatic and a fool. It is the immortality of folly to which he has attained.

See the ascent through which Paul has led us. He began with eloquence and then led us upward into prophecy and onward into knowledge and onward and upward into faith, good works, and suffering even unto martyrdom. These are unusual heights of human attainment and excellence; but Paul has led us so far to point out to us that Christian love towers high above all these, is necessary to give them value and make them worth the while. They are great, but Love is greater than them all. The ecstatic talker with tongues, the prophetic seer, the profound sage, the hero of faith, the unfailing philanthropist, and the unfaltering fanatic, sacrificing property and life to the cause, have all been passed in review, and now Paul says to them: "Orator, prophet, scholar, sage, believer, philanthropist, martyr, you are nothing unless you are lover too. Love is worth more than all your graces and gifts."

IX. The Nature of Love

Paul proceeds next to prove the greater excellence of love by introducing us to its nature which he describes in detail: "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked into any paroxysm, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." It is a description characterized by simplicity and sublimity combined. It is so plain in its appearance that we scarcely realize its grandeur, until we remember how perfect a description it is of the greatest man. Substitute for the word "love" the name "Jesus," and we have a perfect description of the disposition and character of our Lord.

1. Manifest in the Character of Jesus. Jesus suffered long, and was kind. Jesus envied not. Jesus vaunted not himself, was not puffed up. Jesus did not behave himself unseemly, sought not his own, never was provoked into the loss of his self-control. He took no account of evil, rejoiced not in unrighteousness, but rejoiced with the truth. He bore all things, believed all things, hoped all things,

endured all things. How true all of that was of Jesus! In him we find the perfect example of Christian love. It is as though Paul had taken Jesus for his model and had noted down the characteristics of his disposition and character and thus had formed his picture of Perfect Love. The apostle John has told us God is love. Jesus was the manifestation of the Father to men. He said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." His life, then, would reproduce fully the love which was the essential being of God. His life was the incarnation and human realization of all the characteristics of love which Paul has put into this picture. Love is greatest, because in the human life of Jesus it showed itself so essentially divine.

It is love which begets love. We love Jesus because of his perfect love. He had all those other gifts which Paul has mentioned, all the other graces of Christian character; but he never would have been the perfect Saviour to us if it had not been that perfect love for us constrained him to the exercise of all these gifts and graces.

2. Manifest in the Use of His Gifts. He spake as never man spake before him. His words were gracious words and words of power. He spake with the tongues of men and

of angels, even as the Son of God, ambassador from heaven's throne; but all his words of instruction, exhortation, warning, supplication were words of love. It was his love for the race which constrained him to speak; and every uttered syllable sounded forth his soul of love. He had the gift of prophecy. He was given to understand some of the mysteries of the world beyond and of the life to come. He drew aside the veil and told us of the last things, the resurrection and the Judgment and the new heaven and the new earth in which righteousness would reign.

In him were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He had faith, not the faith as of a mustard seed which could remove mountains, but the perfect faith of the Sinless Son which could move heaven and earth, bring them together, and make them one. He lived a life of Christian communism, sharing all his goods with the poor. At last he gave his body to be crucified upon a tree. Herein he commended his love to us that while we were yet sinners he died for us. In all his prophecy and revelation of mysteries and impartation of wisdom, the philanthropy of his life and the sacrifice of his death, it was love, and love alone, which led him to these things; and above all these things it is the love which

inspired him to them which attracts the world to his feet to-day.

X. The Eternity of Love

Paul next declares that Love is greater because it is most enduring. "Love never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." The Old Testament prophets have been replaced by the New Testament preachers. The gifts of tongues as the early church had them were revived for a season by the Irvingites in England and by others since their day, only to prove the more clearly that they belonged to the past childhood of the faith.

The knowledge of the ancients has vanished away. Monro Gibson, of London, has said: "Imagine, if you can, a conversation between Pliny the elder and Professor Huxley on biology. The great naturalist of the first century would have to go to school for twenty years before he was ready to begin a conversation with Professor Huxley. His knowledge,

vast as it seemed in his time, would be two thousand years out of date to-day. But would the apostle Paul have to go to school for twenty years before he could begin to talk with an advanced Christian of the twentieth century on faith and hope and love? Not at all. Paul could begin the minute he arrived." What is true to-day of the knowledge of two thousand years ago will be equally true of our knowledge two thousand years from this date.

In his lecture room in Stanford University we heard President Jordan tell how badly behind the times both Darwin and Spencer had come to be in some of their hypotheses; and in a few centuries Darwin and Spencer and Professor Huxley and President Jordan will be as badly out of date as Pliny the elder is to-day. We know in part, and our knowledge soon becomes obsolete and vanishes away. What has become of the work of the great universities of the Middle Ages? The Scholastics, as we call them, piled up gigantic tomes upon tomes, which were supposed to represent all knowledge possible to the human mind. They either have passed out of existence now, or in our great libraries the dust has gathered thick upon them; for they are archæological curiosities and nothing more to-day.

The time will come when faith will have

been turned into sight, and hope will have become realization. Our present faith and hope in that sense will cease, but love lives on forever. It is the greatest force in the universe, greatest because most enduring, the Force behind and above all other forces. It is greater than physical force and greater than intellectual force. It flows from the heart and represents the essential being of God. As Browning said,

> "There is no good of life but love—but love!
> What else looks good is some shade flung from love;
> Love gilds it, gives it worth."

Paul has shown us that it is greatest in comparison with all other gifts and graces, greatest because it most perfectly reproduces the nature Divine, and greatest because it will outlast all these other things. Perfect love is eternal, and he who possesses it has the assurance of his own immortality. Now that we have climbed the trail with Paul to this broad and sunny table-land of the highest height of Christian experience we will look about us a little more carefully until we realize the beauty of the landscape as we study the various features of it and begin to comprehend something of the harmony and sufficiency of the whole.

PART TWO

ON THE BROAD TABLE-LAND

CHAPTER I

LOVE'S LONG-SUFFERING AND KINDNESS

In the clauses in which Paul gives his description of love he sets before the Corinthian church his ideal of Christian character. The members of that church were to incorporate this ideal. They were to incarnate the spirit of Jesus. It will be worth while to study in detail this Pauline ideal of Christian love. His first statement concerning it is the affirmation that "Love suffereth long, and is kind."

I. Long Temper

Ἡ *ἀγάπη μακροθυμεῖ*, Love is long-tempered, Paul says. We speak of sweet-tempered and quick-tempered and short-tempered people, but we do not speak of long-tempered ones. We have no exact equivalent in English for this Greek word. It is the opposite of short-tempered. Paul in using this word meant to say that love would not fly to pieces at the first provocation. It would preserve its placidity a long, long time. We heard a sister at a camp meeting tell about the sugar-making in the maple grove in the early spring. She

said that when the black kettles first were filled with the maple sap the surface of the unstable liquid could be ruffled by the slightest breeze but there came a time in the process when the maple syrup became too dense to be ruffled by any breeze, however violent, and it presented a placid surface in the midst of the storm. Then she likened her own experience to that dense sweetness, and she said it never was ruffled in any winds of temptation or any storms of adversity. Her love endured all things without losing its sweetness or its placidity. If she reported her experience correctly, she must have been a long-tempered woman.

There is a tale in the sayings of Suleiman the Small to this effect: The Great Sheikh of Kahiri listened to evil concerning the Little Sheikh of Gheeza. When they met the Great Sheikh spoke with abundant abuse. The Little Sheikh simply bowed and said, "God and I can wait." His temper did not snap under the unexpected and undeserved attack. He did not break out into any violent action or any unadvised speech. He was a long-tempered man.

The Greek historians have preserved this tradition concerning Pericles: One day he was attacked on the public street with a torrent

of abuse, and the enraged person continued his tirade until it became dark before he had exhausted his spleen. When he finally paused Pericles said quietly to his servant, "Bring a lamp now and light him home." Pericles was a long-tempered man and a great statesman. The Greeks regarded him as the consummate flower of the Greek culture and life.

Susannah Wesley was the mother of many children and not one of them was born a saint. At one time her husband said to her, "That is the twentieth time you have told that thing to that child; why do you repeat it twenty times?" Susannah Wesley replied, "Because nineteen times are not sufficient." Susannah Wesley was a long-tempered woman. There are such women and there are such men. If any one says, "I cannot be that way," Paul says, "Love can."

Susannah Wesley must have been such a woman as Lowell described in his verse, when he said,

"Cloudless forever is her brow serene,
Speaking calm hope and trust within her, whence
Welleth a noiseless spring of patience,
That keepeth all her life so fresh, so green,
And full of holiness—that every look,
The greatness of her woman's soul revealing,
Unto me bringeth blessing, and a feeling
As when I read in God's own holy Book."

John Wesley was the son of Susannah Wesley, and he wrote, "Let thy love be long-suffering and patient. . . . Let it be kind, soft, benign; inspiring thee with the most amiable sweetness and the most fervent and tender affection. . . . In love, cover all things, hope all things, and endure all things, . . . not some, not many things only; not most, but absolutely all things. . . . Call nothing intolerable; never say of anything, 'It is not to be borne.' Love is proof against all. Love triumphs over all."

Philo called patience the queen of the virtues. It is so much easier to fight than it is to keep one's temper. It is so much easier to relieve oneself in violent speech and action than it is to be patient and endure. The people who can do great and valiant deeds far outnumber those who can bear great wrongs. There are many great soldiers where there are few saints. Faith stops the mouths of lions, quenches the power of fire, waxes mighty in war, turns to flight armies of aliens. Faith does all of that, and it is easy enough for some people to have the faith which will do all of that. Love suffers long, and is kind; and that is quite a different thing. Most people do not find it so easy to do that.

II. Kindness

Love suffers long, *μακροθυμεῖ*, and Love is kind, *χρηστεύεται*. It is necessary to look at the words which Paul used to be sure of his meaning. These two words are joined again and again in Paul's writings. In the Epistle to the Galatians Paul essays to give the component elements of the one fruit of the Spirit, and in making the list he begins with "love, joy, peace," and then immediately he adds, "long-suffering and kindness," *μακροθυμία* and *χρηστότης*.[1] In the Epistle to the Romans Paul mentions these two attributes together as characteristic of God's treatment of the sinning race, "Dost thou despise the wealth of his kindness, *χρηστότητος*, and forbearance and long-suffering, *μακροθυμίας*?"[2] In the Second Epistle to the Corinthians Paul declares that he and his fellow workers have commended their ministry as the servants of God in many ways and, among others, in "long-suffering, *ἐν μακροθυμίᾳ*, in kindness, *ἐν χρηστότητι*."[3] In the Epistle to the Colossians toward the close of his ministry Paul still exhorts all Christians to put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, "kindness, *χρηστότητα*, and long-suffer-

[1] Gal. 5. 22.
[2] Rom. 2. 4.
[3] 2 Cor. 6. 6.

ing, *μακροθυμίαν*."[4] The two go together and they are characteristics both of God and of Christ the revealer of God.

Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, because I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest to your souls; for my yoke is a kindly one, *χρηστός*."[5] It had no rough edges. It never galled. Jesus had made yokes there in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth and he had seen to it that no yoke went out of his hands until it had been smoothed to the last possible degree. He had too much compassion for the dumb, driven cattle of those Galilæan plains and hills to allow any portion of his handiwork to add a particle to their discomfort and their pain. Would he not be just as compassionate and as kindly to those poor people who became his disciples and followed with him? If they took his yoke upon them, they would find it a kindly one. The kindliness of Jesus was simply a revelation of the kindliness of God. Peter wrote in his epistle that all that the Christians needed to do was to taste and see for themselves that God was a kindly God, *"οτι χρηστὸς ὁ κύριος."*[6]

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[4] Col. 3. 12.
[5] Matt. 11. 29, 30.
[6] 1 Pet. 2. 3.

Long-suffering and kindness are attributes of God and were characteristics of Jesus. Paul appropriates them here to his description of Christian love, and we may be sure that he regards them not as natural gifts but only as gifts of grace. They come from God and make man Godlike and Christlike in character.

III. Gifts of Grace

1. Not temperamental. There are people whose long-suffering is merely a matter of temperament. One man is born into this world with a sanguinary temperament, and the inside of him is all fire and flame, and his spirit is continually in motion, and his heart like a Vesuvius within him is always trembling as with earthquake shock or else in violent eruption. It is natural for such a man always to be impatient. On the other hand a man may be born into this world with a phlegmatic temperament, and his heart naturally will be as quiet as a millpond, and in the worst circumstances with most admirable patience and most enviable long-suffering he will be ready to fold his hands and say, "Let everything alone; it will all come right in the end."

The patience which is a matter of tempera-

ment is the patience of the donkey who meekly ducks his head under the severest shower of blows and refuses to make any faster time in spite of all beating and urging, but suffers these things long and is still gentle-spirited and kind because these things are all a matter of course to him; for through centuries of ill treatment he has come into hereditary expectation of nothing better than these. Such patience has no consideration here. It never entered Paul's thought.

2. Not stoical. There are people whose long-suffering is a matter of schooling or of philosophy. The red Indian of America thought it was unmanly to display any emotion either in fortune or misfortune; and his impassive countenance might have been mistaken for an illustration of the long-suffering of love. The old Stoics of Rome sought to show themselves superior to all the flings of fortune and all the chances of life; and by strength of their human will they bade defiance to fate.

Quintus Fabius Maximus was busied with the affairs of state, and they brought him word that his wife whom he dearly loved had been killed under a fallen house, and immediately another messenger brought the news that his younger son, upon whom he had

set all the hopes of his heart, had died in Umbria. Quintus Fabius Maximus never changed countenance, the old chroniclers tell us, but went calmly on with his administration of the affairs of the state as if no calamity had befallen him. Such Stoicism is as far removed from Paulinism as darkness from light. Such external expression of long-suffering may cover an internally cold and eternally despairing heart.

The long-suffering which arises from real or assumed indifference to all earthly things is sottish insensibility. The long-suffering which arises from a donkeylike disposition to let things go as they will because things always have gone so and even the worst things some time will have an end is the long-suffering of laziness or of the beast and is unworthy of a man, endowed with reason and freedom. The long-suffering of love has nothing to do with long-suffering of this sort.

3. Not mechanical. There are people whose kindness is mechanical. We have seen schoolteachers, and especially kindergarten schoolteachers, who thought that it was a part of their professional duty to be pleasant with the children; and we have seen shopgirls, clerks in department stores and similar establishments, who thought that it was a part of

their business equipment always to present a pleasant countenance to every customer; and we have seen these people turn on a smile just as you would turn on an electric light. One moment their countenance would be as blank as the glass globe about the electric wire, and then by a turn of the inner mechanism a smile would come flashing, just as when you pressed the button the electric light would flash out; and the effect was as mechanical in the one case as in the other.

4. Not calculated. There are people whose kindness always is calculated, and for the display of it they always expect an equal or a larger return. Their kindness is like that of Cicero, who said, "Kindness must not be shown to a young man, nor to an old man; not to the old man, because he is likely to die before he can have an occasion to repay the benefit; and not to a young man, because he is sure to forget it." Cicero's kindness then, limited to the middle aged who would be likely to have ample opportunity to pay back all they received with interest, may be kindness indeed to the recipient but on the part of the giver it is self-evident selfishness.

The long-suffering and kindness mentioned here are twin streams from one source, but that source is radically different from any we

have as yet suggested. Paul says that genuine long-suffering and kindness, independent of temperament and independent of circumstance, spring from Christian love. Love suffers long and is kind, and love never fails. Love's gifts and graces are compatible with any degree of energy and with every form of activity. Anyone can have them in any condition of life; but they are flowers which do not grow wild in any man's garden. They are blossoms from the heavenly paradise, and they are plucked with the two hands of prayer and of faith. They are not natural gifts. They are gifts of grace. We need to look, then, for men whom God has called and whom he has richly gifted with his grace to find the best examples of that love which suffers long and is kind. The Bible is full of illustrations.

IV. Bible Examples

1. Noah found grace in the sight of God; and God told him to build an ark. For days and for weeks and for months and for years he hammered away, and the people laughed at him and told him he was crazy; but he never quit his work except to preach to them repentance and consequent salvation. He was a carpenter, and the apostle Peter tells us

that he was a preacher of righteousness. In these respects he was like Jesus, the carpenter evangelist, and he was like Jesus too in his long-suffering kindness; for the more the people jeered the more patiently he labored and preached. Yet he made no impression upon their hardened hearts. He suffered long with them and was kind to them to the very end, but half an hour before the flood came he could have sold the ark to them for kindling wood and that was the only use they would have made of it. According to the story, Noah endured the contradiction of sinners against himself for six hundred years with all kindness of heart and patience of soul. Then he went into the ark with all his family and the door was shut; and there was no further use for kindling wood in that vicinity while the ark proved itself to be otherwise handy.

2. Job's patience was tried with business losses, bereavement, and suffering, but the Book says that he was perfect and upright, fearing God and eschewing evil. When the Sabeans had stolen his oxen and the Chaldeans had carried away his camels and a cyclone had slain his seven sons and three daughters, the long-suffering and patience of Job was such that he sinned not nor charged God foolishly; but, sitting down amid the

ruins of all his earthly happiness, Job said without bitterness and in all kindliness of spirit and submission of soul, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

3. Moses was the meekest man, and we read of him that "Moses was tried above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." He was an active spirit, but the Lord tried him by sending him out for forty years into the wilderness to feed sheep. Sheep are most unreasonable creatures. Sometimes they seem to have no sense at all. Moses suffered long with them and learned to be kind to them even when their stupidity exasperated him most. Then for forty years God made him the leader of the people of Israel, and Moses found them more unreasonable and unmanageable than any flock of sheep ever pretended to be. If any man ever was tempted to lose his temper, it was Moses. If any man ever had his patience tried, it was Moses. He had done everything imaginable for the people, and they ought to have followed him without a question wherever he might choose to lead; but instead of this they grumbled and grumbled, complained and complained, rebelled and rebelled. Now they wanted water, and now manna, and now meat, and now the onions

and leeks of Egypt, and now the golden calf of the heathen worship. Moses bore with them, suffered long with them and was kind. If he had not been one of the most patient men who ever lived he could not have done it. One time, and one time only, we are told that his patience failed under the heavy strain.

4. The apostle James tells us, "Take the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience."[7] See how in all their difficulties and discouragements they never became bitter in spirit. See how they suffered long and were kind. Elijah was full of zeal, a prophet of fire; but the prejudices and the idolatries of the people were like icebergs round about him and he could not melt them down. He had to flee into the wilderness to be fed by the ravens and then by a poor widow. He, the man of zeal, the prophet of fire, had to be quiet and keep himself hidden; for despite all his preaching the people worshiped Baal and the king worshiped Jezebel. He suffered long and was kind, and yet it seemed to him that he alone served the Lord.

5. Isaiah was told at the time of his call that the hardened people would not hear nor understand, and he preached through the

[7] Jas. 5. 10.

reigns of four kings and at the end of his long ministry he cried, "I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain; yet surely my work is with my God."[8]

6. Jeremiah is the prophet of lamentation. His lifelong lamentation was that the people would not heed his warning and be saved. They derided him daily. They mocked him and defamed him. They imprisoned him and put him into the lower pit. They burned the roll of his prophecies, and they disobeyed him in every command. They carried him bound and a prisoner with them to Egypt; and they said to him at the same time, "As for the word that thou speakest to us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee." What was true of one was in a large measure true of all the ancient prophets. They were examples of suffering affliction and of patience. They suffered long and kept their spirits sweet, for it was their love to God and their love of souls which constrained them to all their crucifixion of natural tempers and all their sacrifice of self.

V. Every-day Examples

1. Love suffereth long and is kind. That is true of love alone. Even the most admirable

[8] Isa. 49. 4.

natural temperament will fail us sometimes. Nothing less than the Christian experience of love will keep our tempers sweet always. Love can do that. Love will do it. See this mother whose wayward son long ago has exhausted the patience of every other member of the household. They have said bitter things to him, and they have treated him with the severity which his conduct deserved; but his mother loves him and prays for him and pleads with him and speaks kindly to him still, even when he knows that he has wrung her heart with anguish by his wrongdoing and that her strength is fast failing under the heavy burden he has put upon her to bear. It was Bishop Westcott who said, "What we can do for another is the test of Power; what we can suffer for another is the test of Love." The mother's love stands the test. When all the rest of the world has given the boy up as a hopeless case and is ready to turn its back upon him in disgust or despair, her love never fails. The mother suffers long and is kind, and some day a miracle is wrought in her behalf.

The vagabond son wanders into some church or some mission or some Salvation Army Corps, and listens to the message of the forbearance of God and the long-suffering

kindness of the Saviour of men, and he says to himself, "I can believe that is true; for I have seen the love of God and the spirit of Christ in my mother;" and he accepts the message, kneels at the penitent form, stands up a new man in the Lord, drops his tobacco and his whisky and his opium and his filthy habits and his evil associates and lives an honest and respectable life in the world. Everybody is astonished except that good mother whose long-suffering kindness and love had made his regeneration possible. We have known such cases in our own community; and we have been glad at last that Christ's love and the mother's love, unlike our own, have been willing to suffer long and be kind.

2. There is that patient wife who suffers and is silent and who smiles in her suffering. Through all her husband's neglect and ill treatment she clings to him, is faithful to him, loves him still. Her folks say to her: "Leave him and come back to your home. We will see that you have enough to eat and to wear at least." The neighbors all tell her: "You ought to shut the door in his face, and lock it too. It would do him good to sleep out of doors a few nights, and he does not deserve a decent home with you." The wife says never a word. She suffers on and is silent. She

suffers long and is kind. Only love will do that.

3. We have seen men and women of God in the city missionary work labor with and for the weak and erring ones, lift them to their feet, help them into honest employment, give them time and attention and words of constant cheer and encouragement, rejoice that they were stable for a few weeks or a few months at a time. Then the word would come that they had fallen again, gone back to the drink or gone back into vice; and we have seen those missionaries search diligently for the wanderers through all the city slums, find them in some den of iniquity and in some fathomless depth of despair, speak to them kindly, assure them of forgiveness and the possibility of another attempt at reformation with better result. We have seen them do that again and again and again; and we never have seen anything else which made us so sure that the spirit of Jesus the Good Shepherd still was alive in this world, the spirit of love which would suffer long and be kind.

VI. The Patience of Jesus

The long-suffering and kindness of this chapter are those which flow from Christian love, such love as the life of Jesus constantly

showed. How patient he was with every one!

1. His own nation of the Jews ought to have received him with open arms as the longed-for Messiah. They ought to have heeded his counsel and thus have prepared the way for the kingdom of God upon the earth; but they rejected his teaching and refused to believe in his authority. Yet he suffered long with them; for he loved them to the end, and he died for them at the last.

2. How long-suffering and kindly-spirited and patient he was with his disciples! The clearest revelations were made to these. The Lord had every reason to expect from these unswerving faith and implicit obedience and unfailing love; but they were so slow of heart and so dull of hearing. Even to the end they seemed to be incapable of receiving the spiritual conception of the Kingdom he had so persistently taught. Yet the Lord always was patient with them. He gave them line upon line, precept upon precept. He told them twenty times, if nineteen were not sufficient; and he forgave them when, after all, they showed that though they had been so long time with him yet they had not known him.

3. How patient he always was with the publican and the sinner! When the world had given them up as irredeemably lost, he said,

"It is my mission to save you." When they wandered into the far countries of willful transgression, he followed them with shepherd faithfulness and with fatherly solicitude and care. When everybody else was ready to stone them and inflict the full penalty of the offended law, he said, "I do not condemn you; go, and sin no more." That was the spirit of Jesus, the spirit of love which suffered long and was kind.

Paul knew what the long-suffering of Jesus was. Paul called himself the chief of sinners, and he said that Christ Jesus had shown forth in him all of his long-suffering, *τὴν ἅπασαν μακροθυμίαν*.[9] Paul had persevered in his persecution of the Christians until he deserved to be smitten from the face of the earth, but a vision of the nonresisting Christ was granted him, asking in all long-suffering, "Why persecutest thou me?" and Paul was won by the Patient Sufferer as he never would have been by a retaliating and punishing Lord. At the end of his own career Paul exhorted Timothy to follow the example he had set in all his ministry and to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all long-suffering, *ἐν πάσῃ μακροθυμίᾳ*, those who were under his care.[10] Paul had

[9] 1 Tim. 1. 16.

[10] 2 Tim. 4. 2.

learned from Jesus what long-suffering was. Let Timothy now learn from him.

Paul reproduced the spirit of Jesus and Jesus represented and revealed to men the spirit of the Father. God is love, and that means that God is long-suffering. Through all world history there has been presented to the eyes of the universe the moral scandal of sin and the sufferance of sin. Men have sinned against God and against light in every age, as they sin against God and against light to-day. Sin has deserved death; but sinners have sinned on and have reached old age. In the forbearance and infinite patience of God they have been permitted to prolong their days, even in continuous rebellion against the God who gave them.

As Jesus the Saviour was patient, so God the Father is patient. He keeps his faith in the race. If it is difficult sometimes for men to keep their faith in God, how much more difficult it must be at all times for God to keep his faith in men. He does it! That is the miracle of his love. He knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are dust. He is full of pity. As a father pitieth his children, so he pitieth us. He knoweth our divine origin. He remembereth that we are made in his own image, and that our spirits

never will rest until they find their rest in him. He is our Father. We are his children. He has faith that the children of God will come home.

If he can be patient under the infinite difficulties of dealing with the shortcomings of the race, we surely ought to be patient with each other and with all men. If he has forgiven us ten thousand talents, we ought to be willing and able to forgive a hundred shillings. It was Paul's exhortation to the Ephesians, "Become kind, χρηστοί, to each other, compassionate, forgiving each other even as God in Christ forgave you. Become therefore imitators of God."[11] It is a lofty ideal, that of the imitation of God. It is the ideal of the Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus told us to be perfect even as the Father in heaven is perfect. The perfection he demanded was the perfection of long-suffering love.

[11] Eph. 4. 32—5. 1.

CHAPTER II

LOVE AND ENVY

PAUL'S description of Love begins with two positive statements, "Love suffereth long, and is kind." It is continued with eight negative statements. Sometimes we are driven into negatives to make positive excellencies more vivid by contrast. When Peter would describe the Christian's inheritance he says that it is one that is "incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away."[1] Those three negatives, without corruption, without defilement, and without fading beauty and failing strength, suggest the purity and eternity of an inheritance unlike any which this world knows.

We know so little of heaven. Almost all that we feel sure about in our conception of it is that it is different from this earth. When John attempts to describe it he runs into a series of negatives. He tells us that there is no sin there and there is no sorrow and all tears are wiped away. There is no darkness and there is no death. There is no falsehood and there is no church. There is no need of a

[1] 1 Pet. 1. 4.

temple and there is no need of a sun. God is all in all and God is love. So here Paul gives us eight consecutive negations concerning love, that by contrast its excellence may be made more apparent. He tells us that love is neither envious, nor pompous, nor egotistical, nor ill-mannered, nor selfish, nor uncontrolled, nor suspicious, nor sympathetic with sin.

We begin with the first of these negative statements, "Love is not envious, Ἡ ἀγάπη οὐ ζηλοῖ.

I. Envy Described

Envy is devilish, Love is divine. They are moral antipodes, wholly inconsistent with each other, and absolutely exclusive of each other. The statements can be made without any qualification or any exception whatever, that envy loveth not and love envieth not. Water and oil could be mixed more easily than envy and love.

The inherent and ineradicable meanness of envy is apparent in its definition. Webster defines envy to be "pain, uneasiness, mortification, or discontent excited by the sight of another's superiority or success, accompanied by some degree of hatred or malignity, and often or usually with a desire or an effort to

depreciate the person, or with pleasure in seeing him depressed." Can anyone give a better description of meanness than that definition would make?

Bacon closes his essay on Envy with this sentence: "Envy is the vilest affection, and the most depraved; for which cause it is the proper attitude of the devil, who is called, The envious man, that soweth tares among the wheat by night; as it always cometh to pass, that Envy worketh subtilely and in the dark and to the prejudice of good things, such as is the wheat."

Burton describes the envious man in this language: "So often as an envious wretch sees another man prosper, to be enriched, to thrive, and be fortunate in the world, to get honors, offices, or the like, he repines and grieves. He tortures himself if his equal, friend, neighbor be preferred, commended, do well; if he understand of it, it galls him afresh; and no greater pain can come to him than to hear of another man's well-doing; 'tis a dagger at his heart, every such object. He would damage himself to do another a mischief; as that rich man in Quintillian that poisoned the flowers in his garden, so that his neighbor's bees could get no more honey from them. His whole life is sorrow, and every word he speaks a satire;

nothing makes him fat but other men's ruins."

Chrysostom said, "As a moth gnaws a garment, so doth envy consume a man, to be a living anatomy, a skeleton, to be a lean and pale carcass, quickened with a fiend." To be lean and pale is bad enough; but to be lean and pale and then possessed by the devil is worse; and that is Chrysostom's description of an envious man.

Spenser drew his picture of how

> "Malicious Envy rode
> Upon a ravenous wolfe, and still did chaw
> Between his cankred teeth a venemous tode,
> That all the poison ran about his jaw;
> But inwardly he chawèd his own maw
> At neighbor's wealth that made him ever sad."

Milton names envy as one of the Seven Deadly Sins and calls it "the eldest born of hell." Ruskin calls our attention to Giotto's spiritual insight in his fresco at Padua, where he has painted Envy as an old hag with a snake crawling from her lips and then coiling round to strike her in the forehead. She has fingers like claws and she is being consumed in flames and she is generating her own suicidal poison. This is the conception of envy which the great poets and artists have given us, and it is one from which any sensitive soul naturally would shrink in horror and disgust.

II. Envy Illustrated

One would suppose that if envy were so utterly detestable a thing as these masters would seem to think it, "the beginning of hell in this life, and a passion not to be excused," it would be a very rare occurrence indeed to find it harbored in a human heart; but it is one of the most surprising things in connection with our race that envy should be so natural and universal a complaint as it is. From the very beginning the pages of sacred and of secular history have been full of it. The illustrations throng upon us. On the first pages of Genesis they begin.

1. In the Old Testament. Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain; and Cain was very angry that his brother should be preferred before him. Envy soured his visage and poisoned his heart and finally crazed him with rage, and he rose up against his brother and slew him. Esau was the elder son, and so deserved the birthright and the blessing. Jacob envied him his rightful preference, and so he lied to his old, blind father and deceived him and supplanted Esau from his place of honor. Then Esau hated Jacob and sought for his life. Envy will lie and cheat and murder and do anything else that is bad.

Leah was the mother of four children and Rachel had none at all and the record is that Rachel envied her sister, and there was consequent domestic disharmony in the household of Jacob for years. Joseph was Jacob's favorite son. He loved him more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age, and he made him a coat of many colors; and when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than any or all of them, they hated Joseph and they could not speak peaceably unto him. When they had the opportunity, if it had not been for Reuben's interference, they would have slain him; and as it was, they sold him as a slave into Egypt.

Jacob had envied his brother, and Jacob's wives envied each other, and Jacob's sons envied their brother and almost broke Jacob's heart. Envy had made him a liar and deceiver in the beginning of his life, envy created discord in the domestic economy of his middle life, and envy deprived him of his favorite son and well-nigh brought down his gray hairs with sorrow to the grave in his old age. So much for the illustrations in Genesis. Other books in the Bible are equally full of them.

We remember how Saul envied David his popularity and how he sought to take his life, how he threw the javelin at his head, hunted

him from his court, and exiled him from his native land. We remember how Haman had such an envious heart that it almost killed him to honor his enemy Mordecai as he himself had hoped to be honored by putting upon him the royal apparel and giving him the king's horse to ride and the king's crown to wear and leading him through the street with the proclamation that this was the man whom the king delighted to honor. It surely would have killed Haman to have done that over again; but he was hanged before he had the chance to make the experiment.

2. In Ancient History. We read in Plutarch that Dionysius the tyrant of Syracuse punished Philoxenus the musician because he sang better than the tyrant himself could, and Plato the philosopher because the philosopher could beat him in an argument. We read in Roman history that Adrian the emperor was a man of the same stamp. He killed all his equals and mortally envied all poets, painters, and artificers who seemed to excel him in anything. Domitian the emperor envied Agricola because, though he was a private citizen, he was of such excellent character that he seemed to obscure the emperor's honor and to eclipse the emperor's fame. Cambyses slew his brother Smerdis because

the brother could shoot better with bow and arrows than he. Caligula slew his brother because his brother was the better-looking man.

Richard of England and Philip of France were fellow soldiers in the Holy Land; and the Crusaders soon saw that Richard was the braver of the two. When they began to look to him as the chief, Philip became envious, disagreed with all of his plans, finally came to open defiance, and at last left Palestine in high dudgeon, hastened home, and invaded Richard's territory with public declaration of war.

Theogenes was the prince of Greek wrestlers. Another wrestler was so envious of him that his whole life was embittered. Then Theogenes died and a statue was erected to him in a public place, and the tradition is that the other wrestler went out every night and wrestled with the statue. One night he threw it, and it fell on him and crushed him to death. He was a big fool, but he was no bigger fool than any other envious man.

Francis had heard that Raphael was the prince among painters and he sent to Raphael, asking him to send him one of his pictures. Raphael complied with the request. Francis received the picture, looked at it, recognized its inherent worth, fell into a fit of envy and

died. Envy is not always thus fatal. If it were, most of us never would have lived to see this day.

Chrysostom was right when he said, "As a moth gnaws a garment, so doth envy consume a man." There was a Roman citizen named Mutius who, as everybody knew, had a very envious and malignant spirit. One day he appeared on the streets of Rome looking very sad, and Publius said, "Either some great evil has happened to Mutius, or some great good to somebody else."

3. In the New Testament. The Greek verb ζηλόω, which is translated "envieth" in this passage, occurs twice in the book of Acts, and it is fair to conclude that the idea expressed by the verb in these passages in Acts will help us to illustrate the thought here. In the seventh chapter of Acts we read, "And the patriarchs, moved with envy, ζηλώσαντες, sold Joseph into Egypt."[2] The verb in the Greek is the same we have here. The feeling, then, is that of Jacob's sons toward Joseph. It is the feeling which brethren can have toward a brother preferred.

It is the feeling of the elder brother in the parable of the prodigal son. What was the matter with him, that he would not come in to

[2] Acts 7. 9.

the feast? He was angry and stayed outside of the house, and when his father went out to entreat him to come in he said, "I have behaved myself all my life, and you never made a banquet like this for me; but now that this scapegrace son has come back, you have killed for him the fatted calf." It was the devil of envy in his heart. He would rather go hungry and sulk there behind the house than to go in and enjoy the good things of the banqueting table. He said to himself, "This younger son, this spendthrift son who claims to have reformed, is treated better than I am, and I do not like it."

There was an assembly of ministers at Elberfeldt; and someone asked them, "Whom does this elder brother represent?" Krummacher answered: "I know him very well. I met him only yesterday." They asked, "Who is he?" and he said solemnly, "Myself." Then he explained that on the yesterday he had heard of a very gracious visitation of God's goodness to a man who it seemed to him was very much less worthy of it than he would have been; and he felt a deal of envy and irritation because of it. That was a good application of the parable.

That pastor who gets vexed because another pastor has greater revivals or larger collec-

tions or better appointments than he has, that Sunday-school teacher who gives up the class because somebody else seems more popular or successful than she is, that committee man in the Young People's Society who will not work at all because somebody else seems to be getting the credit or more notice at least than he does, each of these is harboring that little, mean devil of envy in his heart. It slips into the church membership. It shows itself among brethren of the same congregation and denomination oftentimes, and between different denominations it may be even more clearly manifest.

The second instance of the use of this verb in the book of Acts illustrates that fact. It is to be found in the seventeenth chapter. Paul and Silas had been holding a three weeks' revival service in Thessalonica, and they had had a very successful revival. Many of the Jews believed, and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. Then we read, "But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, *ζηλώσαντες*, made an uproar."[3] They assaulted the house the apostles were in, and drove them out of the city. We have known other revival services broken up, if not in the same manner, at least

[3] Acts 17. 5.

from the same motive. The members of the congregation of another belief were moved to envy and did all they could by speech and influence at least to break up proceedings.

In our hearing the Mountain Evangelist made a confession along this line in one of his public sermons. He said: "I remember when I was a Presbyterian pastor, trying to build up my church. The Reformers on the hill used to come along and say, 'We are going to have Brother Lord with us for a season.' Brother Lord was a big man down there. I hated him in my Christian way. I did not like to hear him. He used to say to me, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved,' and then he would look at me with an air of triumph. I will not say how I felt. He would beat me in argument every time. I did not know the meaning of baptism then nor the scope of it or anything of the kind, and I would just walk off like a beaten dog. When they would say they were going to have Brother Lord, I would say, 'Brethren, I hope you will have a good time and gather in as many as you can,' and I never told a bigger lie in my life. So it was with the Methodists and the Baptists. I did not want any of them to get anybody. I did not want them to get ahead of me. I wanted to get ahead of them;

and when they would have a big meeting, I would send off and get a popular evangelist and manage to keep abreast." What a humiliating confession that was! What a contemptible spirit that would have been in any preacher! Yet there are churches and preachers made on that narrow plan.

The Lord can deliver from every such thing! He to whom authority was given to cast out devils can cast out this devil of envy from our midst!

How can that be done? Marcus Aurelius said, "I have read Greek, Hebrew, Chaldee authors; I have consulted with many wise men for a remedy for envy and I could find none." Marcus Aurelius had not consulted the apostle Paul. Paul would have told him, "Love envieth not, and the way to get rid of envy is to get a baptism of Christian love."

Chalmers preached one of his great sermons on "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection." That phrase gives us the secret of complete victory. Let the heart be opened to the incoming of the baptism of perfect love, and it will expel everything which is foreign to it and inconsistent with it. Every man who loves God with all his heart will love his neighbor as himself. He will cherish no hatred nor malice, take no pleasure in seeing

another humiliated or distressed, but, rather, will rejoice in every brother's success.

Love envieth not. Envy is devilish; love is divine. Love is of God; and every one who loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. Love is to be lived, in Corinth and in Chicago, in England and in India. Therefore we ask Paul to tell us what the further characteristics of love may be, that we may live them wherever we are.

CHAPTER III

LOVE AND EGOTISM

Paul says next, "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, *οὐ περπερεύεται, οὐ φυσιοῦται.*" Sometimes a man does not envy because he is so well satisfied with himself and with his own possessions. He is so proud of these that it never occurs to him that anyone else has anything of which to be proud or which is to be envied. He is free from envy because he is full of vaunting. There are mutually exclusive vices. A miser will not be a spendthrift, and it is not at all to his credit that his one vice frees him from all temptation to the other. So if love envied not simply because love was a braggart, not much would be gained; but Paul says "Love is free from envying and love is just as free from vaunting."

Love is not so mean as to envy and love is not so foolish as to be puffed up. Love is not egotistical. Love never is vain-glorious. Love is no proud self-boaster. Love is no swell. The characteristics of Christian love as outlined in this chapter seem simple enough in themselves, and yet it seems rarely enough that any individual realizes them. The characteristic mentioned now is possibly as rare

in ordinary life as any other that the chapter contains. Where are the men or the women who never have been known to vaunt themselves and never have seemed to be puffed up? There are some such people in every community, but they are comparatively rare specimens.

I. Vaunting Almost Universal

Pascal has written, "Vanity has taken so firm a hold on the heart of man that a porter, a hodman, a turnspit can talk greatly of himself, and is for having his admirers. Philosophers who write of the contempt of glory do yet desire the glory of writing well; and those who read their compositions would not lose the glory of having read them. We are so presumptuous as that we desire to be known to all the world; and even to those who are not to come into the world till we have left it. And at the same time we are so little and vain as that the esteem of five or six persons about us is enough to content and amuse us."

It is the universal vice. We all are ready to excuse our own failings, and to veil our own faults under the glamour of some assumed virtue. Thus we form a better opinion of ourselves than that for which anybody else can

see any good reason. Our stinginess we call economy; our cowardice is prudence; our burst of anger is righteous indignation; our mean and cutting words are frankness and plainness of speech. Our selfishness always has solid reasons, and our sins easily can be justified in our own eyes. To us our crows are all doves; and however black they may seem to other eyes and however harsh their cawing may sound in other ears, to us they are gentle and innocent, cooing and pure, the very pride of our household and heart. "Could all mankind," said John Norris, "lay claim to that estimate which they pass upon themselves, there would be little or no difference between lapsed and perfect humanity, and God might again review his image with paternal complacency, and still pronounce it good."

In the book of Proverbs we read, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes."[1] Most people are sure that other people are fools, and most fools are sure that they themselves are wise. The biggest fool is the man who is sure that he alone is wise and all the rest of the world is foolish. It would be very difficult to find a definition of a fool upon which all would agree. Possibly there is no other subject upon which there would be such radically

[1] Prov. 12. 15.

differing opinions. One man's fool would be another man's ideal. The wise man's fool would be the fool's wise man. Therefore the definition which would suit one man perfectly would be at the furthest remove from another man's suitable definition.

Yet there is one definition to which all men immediately would be ready to agree. Every man is ready to say: "The fool is the man who does not think as I think. The fool is the man whose opinion differs with my own." The wise man is ready to believe that, for he sees the inherent foolishness of the fool; and the fool is ready to believe that, for, as the book of Proverbs says, "The way of the fool is right in his own eyes."

In the home of one of our neighbors a little fellow who was just learning to talk came to his grandmother and surprised her with the solemn and unprovoked statement: "I is a good boy, Gamma. I is a very good boy. Gamma, you is an old humbug." Comparatively innocent that was in the little child; but unfortunately he expressed the sentiment, seldom so bluntly stated, of all mankind. We all are apt to be like that unfettered specimen of the younger generation, joining our self-congratulation to the condemnation of others.

The Republicans are sure that the Democrats are humbugs who do not have sense enough to run the government except in the direction of the bowwows. The Democrats are sure that the Republicans are humbugs who really believe just as they themselves do but who talk loudly about the danger of entangling foreign alliances and the necessity of high protective tariffs to save the nation. The Communists and the Socialists and the Farmer-Labor Party and the Liberals and all the minority parties are sure that both the Democratic and the Republican parties are humbugs, advocating righteousness and reforms only to get votes while they really are out for nothing but offices and spoils, while they themselves represent the concentrated and consummated wisdom and sincerity of the nation. Every political party is ready to say: "We are the people. Wisdom is with us and wisdom will die with us. Therefore, you will cast in your lot with us, if you are wise." Even the way of a fool is right in his own eyes.

The religious man is sure that he has chosen the path of wisdom; but the irreligious man is prone to call all religious people fanatics, cranks, and fools. A commercial traveler who was of that opinion was traveling in the same car with a clergyman, and by way of a per-

sonal thrust he asked the clergyman if he ever had heard that in Paris whenever a priest was hanged a donkey was hanged at the same time. The clergyman smiled at the attempted joke and said, "No, I never had heard that," and then added, "Let us both rejoice, my brother, that we are not in Paris."

Each sect and denomination is apt to think that all others are more or less humbugs or fools. We cannot conceive how sensible men can go through the mummeries or hold to the absurdities which we see in other churches and creeds, and what puzzles us in them puzzles them in us; so that we are exactly even on that score. We are willing to give them credit for honesty of belief and sincerity of soul if they are willing to give us credit for the same; but when we find a man who believes that he has the whole truth of God in his private possession and that everybody who does not agree with him in every particular is unworthy of his fellowship and Christian association, we know that he is a fool of the first water.

Yet we have noticed that even if an individual of that stamp may preach the non-necessity of physical labor to those who have sufficient faith in God to trust him for their daily bread, even if he preach that all sick-

ness is sin and all the saints will be perfect in health all the time, even if he preach that death can be avoided by the faith which claims a present immortality, even if he preach that the Lord has come for the second time and we are now living in the midst of the millennium, even if he preach that the Second Coming of the Lord and the end of the world are due to arrive at a certain date near at hand, even if he preach that marriage is not a divine institution and that God has nothing to do with it, even if he preach that all the churches are unclean and therefore we ought to have nothing to do with them, even if he preach the most extravagant nonsense imaginable, he always can find some fools who will follow him.

While we have respect for the sincerity of those in other churches who may differ with our church or with us in their opinions in certain matters, we have very little respect for either the sense or the sincerity of the man who professes to be such a saint of God that no one of the churches is good enough for him. Jesus never became so holy as that. He belonged to the visible church, corrupt as it was in his day; and he was faithful to all of its services and ordinances as long as he lived. They had to crucify him to get him out of it.

There was no other way to do it. John Wesley lived and died in the Established Church, corrupt and dead as it was in his day. They called him hard names and persecuted him and mistreated him in every imaginable way; but he was a Churchman to the end. They refused him the use of their church pulpits for a time, but they could not refuse him admittance to their communion; and Wesley lived in loyal union and communion with the church all his days.

A man once came to Spurgeon and asked him if his church was a pure church, and he said that he was looking for a pure church that he might belong to it. Spurgeon said that he did not know about his church. He did know that there were many good people in it, saintly people and truly Christian people; but there might possibly be a Judas among them, as there was in the company of the Lord's first apostles; and there might be an Ananias and a Sapphira among them, as there were in that first Christian church founded at Pentecost; and there might be some deceivers and idolaters and those who would walk unruly, as there seemed to have been in the churches at Rome and Corinth and Galatia and Ephesus and Colossæ and Philippi and Thessalonica and all the others

to which Paul and Peter and James and John and all the apostles ministered and to which the New Testament epistles were written. He did not know that his church was any better than these New Testament churches had been. On the whole he thought that his church was not the one this brother was looking for. Indeed, he did not know that there had been such a church in all history; "but," said Spurgeon, "if you should happen to find such a church, I beg of you do not join it, for you would spoil the whole thing."

If we were in charge of a church and anyone desired to leave the church because he thought he was not good enough to stay in it, we would plead with him to fight on in the ranks and we would pray with him that he might become good enough to stay with us and it would be with the most sincere regret that we would permit his name to be dropped from the church record on that ground; but if we were in charge of a church and anyone desired to leave the church because he was too good for the church and the church was not good enough for him, we would not ask any questions and we would make no objections. We would dismiss him with great fluency and facility and felicity, glad to be freed from his presence on earth and hopeful that he would

be changed in character before we met him in heaven.

No man ever was too good to associate with his fellows, in the church or anywhere else. It is nothing but vain boasting if he claims otherwise. Many of those whom he despises are his superiors in many things. They are better than he, in some ways if not in all. His vaunting is empty. The word carries the suggestion of emptiness with it. No man is infallible. No man is perfect, in the absolute sense. The man who begins to vaunt himself proclaims his own emptiness. The man who begins to boast proclaims his own poverty.

That little French lady fell to disputing with her sister and she said, "I do not know how it happens, sister, but I meet with nobody but myself who is always in the right." Most of us are tempted to feel that way, even if we do not say it. The savage in the simplicity of his egotism and the civilized man in the sublimity of his self-conceit are very much akin.

We read that a Harvard professor has made the calculation that if men really were as big as they sometimes feel, there would be room in the United States for only two professors, three lawyers, two doctors, and one reporter on a city paper. The rest of us would be

crowded into the sea and would have to swim.

How continuously and unconsciously our egotism shows itself! A certain preacher devised a plan to interest his people in the study of the Bible. At each midweek meeting he would announce the subject for discussion one week from that date, so that his people would have one week in which to think about it and to prepare their remarks upon the topic chosen. One evening the subject was "The Character of the Apostle Paul." One of the deacons in the beginning of the meeting began to describe the apostle's personal appearance. He said Paul was a tall, rather spare man, with black hair and eyes and a dark complexion. His picture of Paul was a faithful portrait of himself. Another leading member of the church rose next and said, "I think the brother preceding me has read the Scripture to little purpose if his description of the apostle Paul is a sample of his Bible knowledge. Paul was, as I understand it, a rather short, thick-set man, with sandy hair, gray eyes, florid complexion, and a nervous, sanguine temperament." As it happened, this again was a fairly accurate picture of the speaker himself. Then another man took his turn. He had a keen sense of the ludicrous and he was an inveterate stammerer. He said,

"My bre-bre-brethren, I never have fo-found in my Bi-Bible much about the p-per-personal ap-pe-pear-ance of P-P-Paul; but one thing is clearly established and tha-that is, P-P-Paul had an imp-p-pediment in his speech." Unconscious egotists! Admiring the great apostle they each were prone to make him in their thought very much like themselves.

II. Pride

We are all prone to be proud of ourselves. We are proud of our possibilities. If we only had a chance to prove them, then the world might see what great men we are. We are proud of our achievements and we exaggerate them in our boasting, like those old Romans who boasted that all the world was subject to Augustus. Eusebius again brags that Constantine governed all the world. The same thing was said of Alexander, that he wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. Whereas the fact of the case was that neither the Greeks nor the Romans ever held the fifteenth part of the now known world, and not even half of that which was then described. They simply were vaunting themselves, in exaggerated self-adulation. We all are proud of our wisdom in these days. Says Burton, "In former times they had but seven wise men,

now you can scarce find so many fools." In those days the tradition tells us that some fishermen found a golden tripos, and the oracle commanded that it be sent to the wisest man; and Thales sent it to Bias, and Bias to Solon, and Solon to Pittacus, and so on till it had been sent by each one to each one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece. Those wise men were really wise and yet so truly humble that each thought another more worthy than himself. "If such a thing were now found, we should all fight for it, we are so wise. We have women politicians, children metaphysicians; every fellow can square a circle, make perpetual motions, find the philosopher's stone, interpret the Apocalypse, make a new system of the world, new logic, new philosophy, etc. We think so well of ourselves, that that in itself is an ample testimony of much folly."

That beautiful tradition of the Seven Wise Men of Greece, each of whom preferred in honor another rather than himself, comes from the very early history of the nation and may be only a tradition after all. The Greeks of later and more reliable history were not men of that sort. Socrates used to say that if the crier should make proclamation in the public assembly, "Let all the cobblers stand up," or

"Let all the weavers stand up," only those so named would rise from their seats; but if the order should be, "Let all the men of sense stand up," not one would remain sitting. Socrates declared that the most damaging mistake in life was that the majority of men were fools and yet believed themselves to be wise. Probably that is just as true now as in his day.

Suppose that everybody in our country tomorrow noon could be just what he thinks he is capable of being, and that when the town clock struck twelve every man could step into the position which he considers himself worthy to occupy. Where would we all land? The cadets would all be captains, the clerks would all be managers of the concern, the preachers would all be bishops, and most of the congressmen and senators would be President. Most of us would move up somewhere. If everybody could step into the position he thinks himself worthy to occupy, are there many of us who would move down?

Now over against this almost universal vanity the apostle writes this sentence: "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." If that is true of love, it ought to be true of us; for these characteristics of love are the characteristics of the Christ, and they ought to be

the characteristics of every professor of Christian love, every disciple of the Christ. Puffing up is not lovely; and it is sinful, and it is deceitful, and it is dangerous.

III. Puffing Up

The Greek verb which Paul uses, *φυσιοῦται*, means, "is puffed up as by the use of a bellows, is filled with wind." These little colored balloons which are sold on the street corner are pretty to look at and sail loftily enough for a little while if you let them go; but they are very frail indeed and liable to make sudden shipwreck. They will collapse at the first puncture and all the gas or wind will ooze out of them in twenty-four hours at the longest. Those little balloons are suggestive of the little bladders of pride with which people are wont to buoy themselves up in the winds and currents of this world. We recall that speech of Wolsey after his fall,

> "I have ventured, like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,
> This many summers in a sea of glory;
> But far beyond my depth: my high-blown pride
> At length broke under me; and now has left me,
> Weary and old with service, to the mercy
> Of a rude stream, that must forever hide me."

It is dangerous to trust to these blown-up bladders of pride, these little puffed-up bal-

loons of self-vaunting which last us so little while and then burst above us or break under us and leave us helpless and flat.

Love is not puffed up, like that frog of Æsop's fable. The ox came along and stepped on one of the little frogs in her absence and when the mother returned they told her how a huge beast had crushed one of their brothers to death, and the mother frog puffed herself out and wanted to know if the beast was as big as that in size. One of the little frogs said, "Cease, mother, to puff yourself out; for you would, I assure you, sooner burst than successfully imitate the hugeness of that monster." We think of that fable whenever we read Paul's statement here, and we think of the many people we have known who would not be content to be one of the biggest frogs in their puddle, but who puffed and puffed themselves out in the vain endeavor to rival in size every ox in the meadow; people who in their desire to push their way into society maintained domestic establishments beyond their income and beyond their ability and in their desire to keep up appearances strained and strained and overstrained until at last they burst into bankruptcy, and then they were only lifeless frogs instead of life-size oxen. It is dangerous to be puffed up beyond

measure. Even if the result is not fatal, it is likely to make one ridiculous.

We heard John B. Gough say once in a lecture: "A Boston minister told me that when he was a young man he preached a sermon in a strange church and made a brilliant effort and sat down quite well satisfied with himself. An old Scotch minister who was in the pulpit made the closing prayer, and he said, 'O Lord, bless this young man who has addressed us; and, O Lord, prick him hard till he has lost all his wind;' and the Boston minister told me, 'It was the best lesson I ever had in my life.'" It is dangerous to be puffed up. Sooner or later one is sure to be puffed down.

IV. Love's Humility

In the Corinthian church to which Paul writes this epistle there were those who measured themselves by themselves alone and who fully satisfied their own standard of excellence. In Pharisaical pride they put themselves on public parade as patterns of propriety in every respect. There were some among them who thought they were much superior to the apostle Paul. They said of him: "In personal appearance he is contemptible and base. His bodily presence is insignificant

and weak. In speech he stammers. His rhetoric is of the rudest kind. He is a weakling, and we have serious doubts as to his sanity or his personal responsibility for either his actions or his sayings." Then they said of themselves, "We have not come to you unauthorized and irresponsible, as he did. We have these letters of recommendation from the brethren at Jerusalem."

Paul heard of these things there in Macedonia and he wrote to the Corinthians in the second epistle, "Not he who commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth."[2] Whom did the Lord commend? These slanderers and vain boasters are unheard of in the after history. Paul went on about his business and God commended him everywhere and wrote his biography in the race in letters large and plain for evermore. He was God's chosen vessel to bear his name unto Gentiles and Jews and before the kings of the earth. Yet what did he continually say of himself? "I am the least of the apostles who am not meet to be called an apostle."[3] "Unto me who am less than the least of all the saints is grace given."[4] "Christ Jesus

[2] 1 Cor. 15. 9.
[3] 2 Cor. 10. 18.
[4] Eph. 3. 8.

came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief."[5]

"God resisteth the proud, but he giveth grace to the humble."[6] He condemneth the vain boaster. He commendeth the humble in heart. Milton says that it was pride that made the angels fall, and all the world knows that it is human pride which most often stands between a soul and the commendation of God. Egypt was proud, and Ezekiel prophesied, "Thus saith the Lord, They also who uphold Egypt shall fall, and the pride of her power shall come down."[7] Moab was proud, but Isaiah prophesied, "God shall bring down your pride."[8] Babylon was proud, but Jeremiah prophesied, "Behold, I am against thee, O thou most proud, saith the Lord God of hosts; for the day is come, the time that I will visit thee; and the most proud shall stumble and fall, and none shall raise him up."[9]

The children of Ammon were proud, but Zephaniah prophesied, "As I live, saith the Lord of hosts, the children of Ammon shall be as Gomorrah, even the breeding of nettles and saltpits and a perpetual desolation. This

[5] 1 Tim. 1. 15.
[6] Jas. 4. 6.
[7] Ezek. 30. 6.
[8] Isa. 25. 11.
[9] Jer. 50. 31.

shall they have for their pride, because they have magnified themselves against the people of the lord of Hosts."[10] The overthrow of these nations and the humiliation of their pride simply illustrates the truth stated again and again in the Word. A man's pride shall bring him low. Pride goeth before destruction. Pride shall stumble and fall. Pride cometh, and then cometh shame. Woe to the crown of pride! The Lord will destroy the house of the proud. Every one who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord. The Lord hateth a proud look. A proud heart is sin. God resisteth the proud and he giveth grace to the humble.

Nebuchadnezzar the king looked out of the window upon the city of gold, as Isaiah called it in his prophecy; and its forty-five miles of compass within its great walls were filled with high houses and lofty towers and imposing edifices and magnificent government buildings, and they were filled with many people and much wealth. Nebuchadnezzar looked over it all and said within himself, "Is not this great Babylon which I have built for the house of the kingdom, and by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?"[11]

[10] Zeph. 2. 10.

[11] Dan. 4. 30.

And while the word was yet within his mouth there fell a voice from heaven, "Thy kingdom is departed from thee!" Like a lightning stroke from a clear sky he suddenly was bereft of his reason and memory, and in abject insanity he went wandering out into the wilderness, where for seven years he lived the life of a brute. Over against the proud boaster God's condemnation was written and him who walked in pride he was able to abase.

Over in the Temple court two men were praying. One stood and said: "O God, I am very good. Other men are extortioners, unjust, and adulterers; but I thank thee, O God, that I am not like other men." The other man in his praying had nothing to say about anyone else and had nothing good to say about himself; but bowing his head and smiting his breast he cried, "O God, be merciful to me a sinner!" "I tell you," said Jesus, "this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalteth himself shall be abased and everyone who humbleth himself shall be exalted."[12] It is wise to be humble, and wisdom always is characterized by humility.

Self-conceit is born of ignorance, and a sufficiency of self-conceit will breed continuous

[12] Luke 18. 14.

ignorance. Socrates was the wisest man among the Greeks, and he knew that he did not know anything. That was his wisdom. That was his superiority to the little men all about him who prided themselves on their knowledge of things they did not know. The Platonic Dialogues are samples of the Socratic questioning which pricked the bubbles of self-conceit and showed the hollowness of their pretension and the emptiness of their vain show. Real scholarship always is humble. The degree of a man's scholarship usually is apparent in the degree of his humility.

If a man knows too much for you to tell him anything, you may be sure that he will live and die a hopeless fool. Superiority to all information from any quarter is a sure sign of exceptional shallowness of attainment. The great scholars always are willing to learn; like Agassiz, the child who "wandered away and away with Nature, the dear old nurse, who sang to him night and day the rimes of the universe." She kept him "still a child, and would not let him go," and this childlike, teachable, humble spirit helped Agassiz his long life through to "read what was still unread in the manuscripts of God," and made him the greatest naturalist in his generation.

The Duke of Argyll knew Tennyson well, and he said of his life-long friend: "He was a man of the noblest humility I have ever known. It was not that he was unconscious of his own powers. It was not that he was indifferent to the appreciation of them by others. But it was that he was far more continually conscious of the limitations upon them in the face of those problems of the universe with which, in thought, he was habitually dealing. In his inner spirit he seemed to me to be always feeling his own later words:

'But what am I?
An infant crying in the night;
An infant crying for the light;
And with no language but a cry.'"

Michael Angelo was an old man. One day Cardinal Farnese found him walking alone in the ruins of the Coliseum, and when he asked Michael Angelo what he was doing there, the old man said, "I go yet to school that I may continue to learn." The great souls always are humble. They know enough to know they ought to be. That is the difference between them and more shallow men. Jerome tells us that Theophrastus was one hundred and seven years old when he lamented that he must quit life just when he was beginning to be wise.

The older men grow and the more they know the less they feel like boasting of their limited attainment; it is only a beginning to be wise. Mozart was lying upon his deathbed when he said, "Now I begin to see what might be done in music." He had written some of the most wonderful sonatas and symphonies we have, and yet at the end of a life of remarkable achievement he felt that he was only a beginner in the art. The French artist Corot once said, "When I find myself in one of nature's beautiful places, I grow angry with my pictures." The best he could do was so far below nature's commonplaces that he was mortified with his own incompetence. We all remember what Sir Isaac Newton said, "I do not know what I may appear to the world; but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, while the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."

It is the man who knows little who is apt to think he knows all. The man who knows most knows how much there is to be known. Why did Fenton John Anthony Hort write so little? Armitage Robinson said of him: "We felt as if he really knew everything. Of

the obscurest book we said, 'Dr. Hort is sure to have it;' of the most perplexing problem, 'Dr. Hort knows the solution, if he would only tell;' of any subject, 'Dr. Hort will tell you all the literature.' And, indeed, nothing seemed to have escaped him that had been done in any branch of theological research." Yet Dr. Hort published very little.

A reviewer has said, "Other men rushed past him into print, and their words were accepted as the highest water-mark of scholarship. Hort knew that it was not the highest, had something higher himself indeed, and would not publish." Why not? He knew too much to be satisfied with the results which satisfied lesser men. He knew so much more than they about what was yet to be known that he kept pressing on toward the goal to the day of his death. He had the ever-increasing humility of great and greater scholarship.

Every great scholar is like that greatest artist of Italy who in his last days drew a design of himself as a child in a go-cart, and wrote under it, "I am yet learning." If we are not willing to learn, there is no hope for us. Seest thou a man who is wise in his own conceits? There is more hope of a fool than there is of him. Seest thou a man who is will-

ing to get good from any source and at any sacrifice of personal pride and dignity? There is some hope that a man like that will get his head and his heart filled with divine grace and truth.

Here is John Wesley, Fellow of Lincoln, a university man, a clergyman of the Church of England. What is he doing in this little room with this little company of poor and obscure Moravians? John Wesley knows more many times over than anyone else in the room, more about the Greek of the Epistle to the Romans; but they are talking about the spiritual experience pictured and promised in it now, and John Wesley sits and listens and learns and his heart gets strangely warmed and finally filled with life and power sufficient under God to regenerate the nation. John Wesley knew that the mysteries of the Kingdom often were hidden from the wise and the prudent while God chose to reveal them unto babes.

It is not easy to be humble. Coventry Patmore calls it

> "the highest degree
> Of the hardest grace—Humility,
> The step toward heaven the latest trod,
> And that which makes us most like God."

Yet Paul seems to think it possible of attainment even in Corinth; and forty years later

Clement of Rome wrote to these Corinthians, "Ye were all humble-minded, not boasting about anything, willing rather to be subject than to govern." The apostle Paul had told them, "Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up." The characterizing quality of Christian love is not egotism but humility.

When his people asked Augustine, "What is the first article in the Christian religion?" Augustine answered, "Humility." They said, "What is the second?" and he said, "Humility." They said, "What is the third?" and he said the third time, "Humility." Pride is as natural to men as their breathing. It is the easily besetting sin of the race; but our Christian religion believes in a radical change in a man's nature, a change so radical that pride and self-love will be dethroned in his heart and humility will become his characteristic instead. Christian love will prove itself in continuous humility; and, thanks be unto the God of all grace, Christianity always has had living examples.

Humility need not be inconsistent with the highest honors which the church or the state can bestow upon a man. Adam Clarke had entered into the experience of perfect love; and he showed always the humble spirit of his Master, even when he was recognized as one

of the greatest scholars in England and the leading commentator of his church and had been advanced to the highest eminence which his own denomination could give him. He writes: "I am returned to London, and am now at the highest pitch of honor Methodism can confer upon me as president of the Conference and superintendent of the London District at the same time. . . . The Lord knows I never sought it. Well, I would rather have one smile from my Maker than all the world could confer besides." That was the humble spirit of Adam Clarke, the first great commentator, in his day.

We can parallel that experience with another nearer our own generation. A Methodist evangelist had been holding meetings in Australia, and thousands had been converted. He was about to leave for America; and at the farewell service the night before his embarkation York Street Church in Sydney was filled to overflowing and a great hall in the neighborhood was filled with the overflow meeting. Early the next morning a great assembly thronged the wharves, and a steamer, specially chartered for the occasion, escorted the steamer on which the evangelist was a passenger down through the harbor to the heads; and the people who packed it were singing

and shouting farewell. The crown prosecutor of New South Wales, a nephew of the Duke of Wellington, was one of the leaders in that demonstration; and he so strained his voice in singing and shouting that day that he was hoarse for a week. At last the outgoing steamer passed the heads, the last farewells were shouted, and the people turned back again.

The evangelist says, "I have always tried to avoid the appearance of being lionized, wishing to hide away at the feet of my Lord; but I fully appreciated the grateful, loving sympathy of the precious souls with whom I had wept and prayed and praised God, and I fully reciprocated their farewell expressions of confidence and love; and as soon as we had passed the heads I went into my cabin and fell down before the Lord and wept and ascribed all the honor to God and prayed that these dear ones whom I had left behind might be true to the end." There is the experience of Christian love, not vaunting itself nor being puffed up, but humbly ascribing all honor to God and humbly acknowledging full dependence upon him. Who was that Methodist evangelist? He was William Taylor, of California, afterward Bishop Taylor of Africa.

There was not a plainer or more unassum-

ing man in all Christendom than he. A man of magnificent achievement, ranking with General Booth in his generation as the organizer of great onward movements of the Christian host; and yet as simple in his manner as a country farmer, as a little child. Gentle-spirited, unselfish, and humble, he was a good example of that love which suffers long and is kind, which envies not, which vaunts not itself and is not puffed up. Any one who knew Bishop Taylor knew what a plain, practical, matter-of-fact man he was, prone to look on all his wonderful work, unparalleled in some respects in the modern church, as a matter of course, possible to any faithful and humble instrument in God's hands. Our modern Pauline missionary had the Pauline humility:

That sturdy plainness in his manner and speech, that seemingly so natural and so continuous humility of soul, was the most attractive trait in his character. If Bishop Taylor had spoken with the tongue of an angel, if he had had the gift of prophecy, and had understood all mysteries and all knowledge, if he had bestowed all his goods to feed the poor and had given his body to be burned, we verily believe that neither here nor in heaven would he ever have vaunted himself about it or have

been puffed up. We believe that he had the experience of perfect love.

That is a possibility of grace to any man; and that is a miracle of divine power wrought in any man. Glorious things have been spoken of the people of God in all history. Marvelous narratives are recorded there on the pages of Scripture, and equally marvelous narratives are to be found in the later history of the church; great wonders of faith and wonders of love, wonders of self-denial and self-sacrifice, wonderful victories in the crusades against sin and heroic achievements in the strife with the lions of the pit, going up and down through the earth seeking whom they may devour.

Yet of all the wonders and heroic achievements and glorious characteristics of the people of God there is none greater than their humility. There in the depths of their own hearts the greatest battles have been fought; and there the supreme triumph has been won. By grace divine they have conquered self; and so have become worthy disciples of that Saviour who when he would commend himself to the suffering and the heavy-laden of earth said to them, "Take my yoke upon you; for I am meek and lowly of heart." Meek and lowly, though divine!

It is natural to be puffed up. It is natural to vaunt oneself. It is natural to be proud and egotistical; but the Christian prays for supernatural grace.

"Thy nature, gracious Lord, impart;
Come quickly from above;
Write thy new name upon my heart,
Thy new, best name of Love."

Love enthroned means spiritual humility. Spiritual humility is best proof of sainthood. We are called to be saints, Paul says. He who calls us is able to give us all that we need according to his riches in glory by Christ.

CHAPTER IV

LOVE AND ETIQUETTE

THE incarnation of the Christian ideal never will be guilty of unseemly behavior. We cannot imagine anything of the kind in Jesus. Probably with Jesus in mind, Paul says, "Love doth not behave itself unseemly."

I. LOVE IS ALWAYS GENTEEL

It is a rather surprising characteristic of love to which Paul introduces us here. He tells us that Love is well behaved. The spirit of perfect love is the spirit of a perfect gentleman. Politeness has been defined as external Christianity; and Christian love here is defined as internal and external etiquette. Politeness has been defined also as "love in trifles," love ruling in all the little details of life. A Christian may be awkward and blundering sometimes, but his love will make even his awkwardness attractive and his behavior never will be unseemly or impolite.

Love will be courteous even to its enemies. Love will be brotherly even on a battlefield. Love never will be a boor nor a brute.

Thackeray said of Dean Swift and Goldsmith: "I think I would rather have had a potato and a friendly word from Goldsmith than have been beholden to the Dean for a guinea and a dinner. He insulted a man as he served him, made women cry, guests look foolish, bullied unlucky friends, and flung his benefactions in poor men's faces."

"Manners maketh the man," as the motto of an ancient school said; but it has been suggested that it would be truer to say that the man makes his manners. The Knights of the Cross will be patterns of chivalry. They will not be selfish and tactless and rude. They will not substitute brusqueness for brotherliness. They will not needlessly bruise a brother's soul. With Saint Francis de Sales they will say, "Judicious silence is far preferable to the truth roughly told." They will be candid, but they will be courteous. They will be honest, but they will at the same time be helpful. Their sympathy will make them seemly.

The Christian man or woman, possessed by the spirit of Christian love, always will be refined and delicate in feeling, sensible in action, full of grace and full of tact. There is no such grace in behavior and spirit and speech as that which is given by the spirit of

love. There is no such tact and refinement of feeling possible to the most polished courtier who simply has been trained in the schools as is possible to the most untutored soul who has begun to love. Love gives insight. It is selfishness which is blind to others' feelings and desires. Love is unmindful of self, but ever watchful to see what the loved one may need, and ever quick with its offer of sympathy and service.

Love gives identity of spirit. Love can put itself into another's place and can love its neighbor as itself. Then it never will behave itself unseemly to its neighbor. It will be impossible for love to do that. It will be like Mary's precious ointment; its fragrance will fill the whole house. Like that delicate perfume, it will pervade all of life's actions and make them pleasant and sweet. We are told that there will be no need of the sun in the New Jerusalem because God is the light of it, the God who is Infinite Love. So love here will be like the sunlight, blessing all upon whom it may fall and making all faces to shine in its reflected splendor. It will shed its beams upon the just and the unjust and will cheer all alike.

Some army officers asked a lady to tell them what a gentleman was, and she answered them

by repeating the fifteenth psalm. "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor. In whose eyes a vile person is condemned; but he honoreth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved." He that doeth these things is a perfect gentleman, the type of honor and good breeding, refinement and courtesy; and the man that doeth these things must be a Christian. The Christian man then is the best type of a gentleman; and that is what Paul is saying in this chapter.

Christian love is the shortest and surest way into good manners. If anyone is desirous of acquiring the external proofs of good breeding and real gentility, the apostle Paul would advise him not to go to a dancing school or a finishing school, but to get the baptism of perfect love. A lady never behaves herself unseemly. A gentleman never behaves himself unseemly. A woman, then, filled with Chris-

tian love will be a lady, a man filled with Christian love will be a gentleman, as surely as the apostle Paul is correct in his characterization. Paul says that love always will be courteous and well behaved. Paul says that the Christian man always will be a gentleman.

There are people who would not accept that statement of fact. To them a gentleman is a man who comes of a good family, or a man of means who dresses in the latest fashion and observes all the social proprieties. A gentleman is a man with kid gloves and blue blood and an establishment. A French writer tells us of that old lady who said: "I have been reading with great satisfaction the genealogies which prove that Jesus Christ descended from David. It shows that our Lord was a gentleman." She would have been satisfied if the Gospels had given no further proof that Jesus was a gentleman than those first chapters of genealogies which showed that he was descended from a king. Paul would not have been satisfied with a gospel of genealogies. He would have looked into the record of the life to see if it was the continuous manifestation of love. Was it true of him that he suffered long, and was kind, vaunted not himself, sought not his own, rejoiced not in iniquity but rejoiced in the truth? Then Paul would

have been willing to say of him, "He did not behave himself unseemly; he was the incarnation of love."

Thackeray tells us about a dying duchess who looked forward to her coming dissolution and her subsequent fate with great calmness because she said she was sure that Heaven would deal politely with a person of her quality; but the probability is that some of the quality people will be surprised by rougher handling after death than they ever have known before. The probability is that no one will be asked, "Are you a duchess?" but the only question will be, "Did you exemplify in your life the characteristics of Christian love which Paul has outlined in his epistle?" Heaven will deal politely only with those ladies and gentlemen who have measured up to that standard; and the probability is that there will be many more of such coming up before the great white throne out of fishermen's huts and carpenters' shops and the cottages of the poor than from the palaces of the nobles and the courts of the kings. They will belong to love's gentility, though they never wore kid gloves nor boasted of their ancestry; and it may be, though they never knew nor practiced a tithe of the rules and regulations of so-called Society.

II. Love May Break Some Rules

Love never will behave itself unseemly; but Love may not observe all of the social proprieties. Many of these are ridiculous and unreasonable; and Love will break them with a clear conscience and a smiling face and a complacent sense of unquestioned superiority. History tells us of that Spanish king whose chair was placed too near the fire; and when the flames leaped higher and higher and he became uncomfortably warm, as luck would have it the court official was not present whose duty it was to move the king's chair. It would have been entirely beneath the royal dignity for the king to move the chair himself; and no one else present dared to brave a breach of court etiquette to do it. So the poor king sat there and roasted; and when at last the court official came whose duty and privilege it was to move the chair, it was found that the king was much overheated, and history tells us that he took suddenly sick thereafter and died. Love would have moved the chair and let proprieties take care of themselves.

There is no more painfully ludicrous chapter in world history than that which records the flight of the king and queen of France from Paris in the days of the French Revolution.

They had decided that their lives were not safe in the city, and that it was high time that they escaped to their friends at Metz. Their flight must be secret and in disguise; but yet the royal pair felt that there must be much and worthy preparation. First, the queen must have a lot of new dresses; for no queen could stir without new clothes. It took time to make them, and they were likely to rouse much suspicion, and so hinder their flight and endanger their lives; but the queen had to have her new dresses. "Moreover," says Carlyle, "her Majesty cannot go a step anywhither without her Necessaire; dear Necessaire, of inlaid ivory and rosewood; cunningly devised; which holds perfumes, toilette implements, infinite small queenlike furnitures: necessary to terrestrial life. Not without a cost of some five hundred louis, of much precious time, and difficult hoodwinking which does not blind, can this same Necessary of life be forwarded by the Flanders carriers. All of which, you would say, augurs ill for the prospering of the enterprise. But the whims of women and of queens must be humored."

Then the king had a stupendous and conspicuous new coach constructed by some of his friends to carry their party in one company. It was heavy and lumbersome, but it

was built according to model and was very grand in its way. Then that night of the twentieth of June all the world knows how they all slipped out of the palace, and how the queen lost her way and there was a delay of two hours or so before they got started; and Lafayette had gotten rumor of the flight and was there to see about it, and there was no moment to lose. Then the governess of the royal children remembered that it was contrary to court etiquette for her to ride in the same carriage with their Majesties, or something of that sort, and she refused to get in, and they had to argue the question with her a long time before she was willing to go in that fashion; and when at last they rolled out of Paris it was only to be captured in good season and brought back to execution.

King Louis on his way to the guillotine did not ride in a stupendous and conspicuous new carriage made expressly for royalty; and Marie Antoinette on her way to the block had no further use for new dresses or toilet cases of inlaid ivory and rosewood. It is one of the most tragically ridiculous chapters of history, that sacrifice of a king and queen of France, who possibly might have made their escape into freedom and further life, hindered, delayed, defeated, and captured by their punc-

tilious observance of petty details of court etiquette.

Christian love can be entirely consistent with an absolute disregard of some of the arbitrary requirements which fashion or the Four Hundred or the customs of the times may see fit to set up. A lady told us some time since that her grandmother had been a lifelong Methodist; but she chanced to go visiting into a neighboring State, and when she came home again she had a flower in her bonnet; and the good church people made so much trouble about that flower in her bonnet that she finally left their communion and went into the Baptist church. It must have been the custom among the Methodists in that community at that time to wear a costume characterized by primitive plainness; and nothing but a Quaker simplicity of dress was countenanced in the public congregation. It would be a strange thing indeed if in these days a woman would be driven out of the church simply because she wore a flower in her bonnet. We have learned that real religion may be consistent with attractiveness of dress and appearance; and we have come to believe that Christian love may be cherished in the heart of a woman, even though she had a flower in her bonnet.

LOVE AND ETIQUETTE

John Inskip was a Methodist apostle of perfect love for many years. In his early life, when he was a member of a Conference in Ohio, he had serious difficulty in his congregation and there was danger of his losing his ministerial standing in the Conference. What was wrong with John Inskip? What was his crime? He was a godly man and he had not broken any of the Ten Commandments. He was a loyal Methodist and had never preached heretical doctrines; but he had come to the conclusion that it was perfectly proper and right for men and women to sit side by side in the Sunday congregation. This was an innovation against which the conservatives rebelled. There were gray-haired grandfathers there who never had sat on the same side of the church with the gray-haired grandmothers, their wives, and it seemed to them that it would be impossible for even the most reverent among them suitably to collect his thoughts for the solemn meditation which befitted the Sabbath, if he should sit surrounded by the women; and it was self-evident that the younger members of the congregation would be tempted beyond measure to think more of their adjacent and attractive companions than they would of their souls or of the sermon.

God had blessed the church in the good old way, when the men and the women sat decently separate from each other; and now if the bars were let down, and the young people and the middle-aged and the old sat promiscuously together, it simply would be turning the preaching into a party, and inviting the devil to run the concern. All past experience was on the side of the conservatives; but John Inskip had made up his mind that if any husband desired to sit with his wife in the Sunday congregation, he not only would not object but he would countenance the procedure as proper and right. There was a great uproar about it. They said it was unseemly; but John Inskip, even with the experience of perfect love, never could see it that way, any more than we do to-day.

It is as true in this generation as in any which has preceded it that the customs of the times may be arbitrary and unreasonable, frivolous and ridiculous; and love will not behave itself unseemly when it calmly and conscientiously and deliberately disregards them. One of the advantages of the twentieth century will be the comparative emancipation of our young men and our young women and our race from the tyrannical tutelage of Mother Grundy, and this will be measurably

replaced by the larger liberty of the children of God.

It will take some courage to decide for ourselves in these matters. It is so easy to say that whatever general opinion approves as seemly therefore is right. No one ever will get into trouble by saying that, and timorous souls always will be ready to take refuge behind the bulwark of public opinion and established custom in their standards of conduct and life. On the contrary, love will say that only that which is right is seemly, and it will take some courage to stand by the right even though one must stand alone. Love can decide for itself what is etiquette; and we would rather have the decision of love on any matter of good behavior or real refinement or Christian courtesy than the dictum of any book of etiquette yet published. Love will not behave itself unseemly. Love can be trusted in that regard.

III. Love, Always Seemly

Is it seemly for women to be out on the battlefield, or is that not Amazonian and unfeminine? Generally speaking, it is better for women to be away from these scenes of violence and bloodshed; but here is a woman with a Red Cross on her raiment, an angel of mercy

and a messenger of peace. She passes from dying soldier to dying soldier and many a wan face lights up with a smile as she goes by. She gives a drink of water to one, medicine to another, and an encouraging word to a third. She stoops and makes a pillow of clothes to put under the head of this sufferer, reads a passage from the Word of God to that other pleading soul, prays with him a moment or two till his eyes are filled with tears of rejoicing and his heart is filled with peace, receives his last message to the loved ones at home, and then closes the eyelids, dimmed in death. It is the spirit of self-sacrificing love which has sent this Sister of the Red Cross out upon the battlefield; and no one would think of calling her unwomanly. Love doth not behave itself unseemly, even in the time of war and on the battlefield.

Here are the purlieus of a great city. Vice holds high carnival here every night. All the grossest passions of the lowest orders of society are displayed on these streets. Gambling, drunkenness, profanity, obscenity here have their home. There are plenty of painted, loud-voiced, loud-mannered women in these cabarets and parading up and down these streets; and no woman of a respectable character, no lady with a reputation to lose, ever

would be seen in this vicinity after night. Wait a moment! Here comes a female figure clad all in black, except the white bow to her bonnet and the white cuffs at her wrists. She moves straight through the throng, for she is on the King's business which requires haste. Her step is light, her manner quiet and self-possessed, her face has the beauty of holiness and the radiance of peace.

She may be insulted by some brazen-faced hussy, but she either does not hear or she does not heed. She smiles on the little ones, running wild here at this late hour of the night, and has a kind word for any slum acquaintance she may meet. For the most part the men and women make way for her with a courtesy unusual with them, and a spirit of silence seems to fall upon them for a moment or two when she has passed. She is a Deaconess, and she has been summoned to the bedside of some sufferer there in a slum garret, anxious to have one more look at a face which has seemed through all these days of sickness like a revelation of the glory and peace of heaven. Is there anything unseemly in her presence there? No, not unseemly, but unselfish; not imprudent, but Christlike in self-forgetting love.

IV. Love Is Like Christ

There were prudes among the Pharisees of our Lord's day who were greatly shocked by the behavior of Jesus when he consorted openly with publicans and sinners; but Jesus said, "The whole have no need of a physician, but the sick," and the summons from a sick body or a sick soul would call him out at any hour of the night and into any slum of the city. The Lord's love of souls never led him to behave himself unseemly, however much he may have been criticized by the Mother and Father Grundys of that day.

He was tried under all conditions and circumstances, he was tested in all classes of society; but everywhere he went he was the incarnation of love and courtesy. In the great city of Jerusalem, and in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth, on the borders of the heathen Phœnicia and in the wilderness of Judæa, on the shores of Gennesaret and on the banks of the Jordan, with the learned rabbi of the Sanhedrin and with the fallen woman at the well, there at the wedding feast of Cana and there with the funeral procession at Nain, with the children and with his disciples, with the lepers and the cripples, with the elders and the scribes, with the enthusiastic populace

of Galilee and with the hostile throngs at the great feast, with Pilate and the Roman soldiers, with Mary and John, he was tried under all circumstances and with all classes, but he never behaved himself unseemly, he always was the same Saviour of courtesy and love. His courtesy was unfailing, because his love was inexhaustible.

Love filled his heart and guided his thought and chose his words. Love moved his hands and beamed from his eye and ruled all his behavior. He always did the right thing in the right place, because love gives wisdom; and he was the incarnation of love. Look at our Lord! His heart always is full of sympathy and his manner always is full of grace. Whoever comes to him finds him always the same. They may come as suppliants and disciples or they may come as blasphemers and revilers, he always is kindly, he never is bitter. The sun may shine over him or the storm may rage about, he is steadfast, simple, gentle, pure; and in the most severe testing he never behaved himself unseemly; he was ever the same loving Lord.

Would you like to know how always to do only what is proper and right? Sit at the feet of this Lord. Look unto him, listen to him, learn from him, follow after him, pray

unceasingly to him, "Give me of the spirit of thy love, that I may not behave myself unseemly in the sight of God and that I always may be courteous and loving to my fellowmen." He is the pattern. He is the ideal. The Christian is to be as his Lord. Jesus was long-suffering, kind, unenvying, unegotistical, well-behaved. The Christian may be so too.

CHAPTER V

LOVE AND ITS RIGHTS

We come now to the most difficult statement which we have found thus far in this chapter. The other characteristics of love which have been mentioned immediately commend themselves to every man's conscience and judgment. As a rule, the most irritable and irascible man will some time or other wish more or less earnestly that he had a more even temper; and he will admire the more equable disposition of his long-suffering neighbor. As a rule, the most envious and egotistical man perforce will feel within him an admiration for any exhibition of genuinely unselfish generosity and humility. All sorts and conditions of men will be ready to express real appreciation of the ideally beautiful character which the apostle has pictured in that love which suffers long and is kind, which envies not, which vaunteth not itself, and is not puffed up; but now the apostle adds a characteristic to which the average man will not yield so ready appreciation or assent. Paul says, "Love seeketh not her own."

I. Rights Maintained

The average man is ready to say: "My own belongs to me. It is my right; and it is right for me to have my right. I do not ask for anything that is not rightfully my own. I would not cheat nor defraud my neighbor in anything; but that which I have earned by my own labor, or that which has otherwise come honestly and honorably into my possession, it is my right and it is my duty to seek for, to claim, and to demand as my own. The law always will justify me in so doing, and there would be no justice in any other arrangement. My own belongs to me. It is my right; and it is right for me to have my right."

That is true. All the law courts in the land will sustain a man in that position. They have been established for that one end—to maintain every individual in his just and legal rights. There may be corruption in the law courts, and it may be that it sometimes has happened that the ends of justice have been defeated by legal technicalities and infinite red tape; but every such case has been a prostitution of their originally righteous intention and design. The law stands everywhere for the maintenance of justice and right. While it is true that some of the greatest scoundrels

who ever escaped State's prison have managed by natural talent and acquired shrewdness to maintain a legally respectable standing at the bar, it is equally true that some of the most honest and honorable men of this nation, some of the noblest characters this world has known, have been found among the lawyers who pleaded in the courts or who had attained to judicial position. They were the men who were most in harmony with the intention of their profession; and they alone have been consistent in their practice with the design of the law.

We have heard it said that lawyers do not make good church-members. That need not be true, and that ought not to be true; and of many lawyers we have known it was not true in any sense. They made as good church-members as any. The profession is honorable in itself, and may be conducted to the good of men and the glory of God. A good lawyer will thus conduct his business; and those who would not make good church-members are not good lawyers. Yet the good lawyer who unites with the church ought to find in it a cleaner atmosphere and a higher grade of conscience and a loftier plane of life than there is in any law court in the land.

The law courts have to do only with legali-

ties and moralities, and justice is the one end and aim of their being; but the church asks men not only to be moral but also to be religious, not only to be good lawyers but also to be good Christians, not only to be just but also to be loving. If the church in this world cannot and does not show men that Christianity is something above and beyond legality, then the church might as well be blotted out of existence and the law courts could be left to take care of the rights and the morals of men. The church is composed of the disciples of Christ, and Christ was the incarnation of the spirit of love, and Paul says, "Love seeketh not her own."

All the members of the real Church of Christ, as the disciples of the Christ, will seek to reproduce in their lives the character of the Christ and the characteristics of the love which he manifested; and in so doing they will prove to all the world that they have within them the powers of the world to come, lifting them above the influence of mere personalities and temporalities into the consideration of universalities and eternities, lifting them out of their selfishness into godliness, above legalities and moralities into the spiritualities of a higher realm, where the soul still will be absolutely just and moral in its

behavior toward all men but no longer will set its affections upon things on the earth, whether they belong to others or whether they belong to itself, but, rather, will seek after those things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. The Christian will suffer long and be kind. The Christian will not be envious of others' rights or privileges. The Christian will not vaunt himself or be puffed up. The Christian will not behave himself unseemly; and the Christian will not seek his own rights regardless of all consequences, but he will seek to do God's will alone.

We are anxious if possible to get at Paul's meaning in this statement. That will be difficult, we apprehend, because his statement here runs so exactly counter to all our natural prejudices and normal principles of action and life. Every Englishman is prone to think that his first duty is to stand up for his rights. That is what an Englishman is born into this world for—first of all to take care of his own rights. He begins to clamor for them before he is twenty-four hours old, and the habit grows upon him with the years. We Americans are only Englishmen in the second and improved edition in this respect; and we have fallen heir to all the English pride of posses-

sion and sense of personal and property rights. The average American is ready to defend his rights, if it takes the last cent of his money and the last drop of his blood. His rights are his rights, and he will maintain them at the risk of everything he holds dear.

It may split the church to which he belongs, or it may cause discord in the whole community. It may lead into lawsuit after lawsuit. It may result in bitterness and estrangement and hatred and slander and a thousand disagreeable and devilish passions and penalties; but right is right and must be maintained at any cost to the bitter end. It may lead to a war which devastates the world and bankrupts the nations and postpones the coming of the kingdom of God for hundreds of years, but the right must triumph even though it be at the expense of thousands of starving children and hundreds of thousands of broken-hearted mothers and wives and millions of the soldier dead. A world in which right is maintained at any cost may be a lost and ruined world. If it ever is saved, it will be saved not in selfish insistence upon exact justice in every case—an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth—but by unselfish love.

Paul had written to these Corinthians in an earlier chapter of this Epistle: "All things are

lawful; but not all things are advantageous. All things are lawful; but not all things build up (the church or the community). Let no one seek his own but another's interest."[1] Now he writes, "Love seeketh not her own." So he sets selfishness with legality to protect its interests over against unselfishness with love as its motive power. Selfishness always asks, "What can I have and how much can I keep?" Love asks, "How much can I give, and what will be to the eternal advantage and edification of all concerned?"

It was said of the early Christians that they suffered wrongs and were silent, that they were persecuted and yet prayed for their persecutors, that they were hated and yet wished well to their enemies and took every opportunity to do them good. In the *Apology* of Aristides we read, "Those who grieve them they comfort and make them their friends." Those were the days of the great triumphs of the Christian faith when it won its way among the peoples by the exhibition of a supernatural love. It is the day of Christianity's greatest defeat when it descends to vindictiveness and revenge.

It may have been possible in the Old Testament times for the children of God to rejoice

[1] 1 Cor. 10. 23, 24.

in the destruction of their enemies and the miseries they suffered, but what Heine called "the taming talisman of the cross" has made it impossible for any Christian to gloat over the temporal or the eternal wretchedness of any man, but only to grieve over his sin and the consequences of his sin. The Jews might exact the last ounce of flesh which was their contract right, but to the Christians the most relentless and atrocious enemy is an immortal soul to be won for God, a brother to be forgiven and to be made a friend by the ceaseless offices of Christian love.

One of the first German ships to cross the Atlantic after the armistice was the little bark bearing the apostle's name, Paul. She encountered terrific storms and was almost pounded to pieces. A British sea captain came to her rescue and brought her into safe harbor in Halifax. It was Captain Musgrave of the Manchester Merchant. Who was Captain Musgrave? He was a man who had had a ship sunk under him by a German submarine and the crew of the submarine had fired upon those who were escaping in the lifeboats. There were those who declared that no German mariner in distress ever would be rescued by Englishmen again; but Captain Musgrave was not of that sort. He forgave as

Christ forgave. He saved as Christ would have saved. He was bent on turning foes into friends. He exemplified the spirit of Christian brotherhood and love.

An American steamer was sunk by a mine, and the crew was rescued by the men in a German fishing-boat. Those particular Americans are not likely to hate those particular Germans any more. The Bishop of Stepney tells how a little girl in East London was in the habit of bringing a bunch of flowers each Saturday night to a German lady whom she loved. She did so all through the war. Her brother went down in one of the submarined cruisers and the German lady hardly expected the flowers that week; but the girl came as usual the next Saturday, and in mourning, but bringing the flowers as before. It is selfishness which turns a man into a brute. It is love alone which can lift him to the plane of the divine.

Sir Edwin Arnold once addressed the Harvard students, and he said to them: "Gentlemen, in 1776 and 1812 you conquered your fathers. In 1865 you conquered your brothers. Will you permit an Englishman to say that your next victory must be over yourselves?" That victory is more difficult to win than ever a Revolutionary or a Civil War. It can be

won only in Christian love. Did Sir Edwin Arnold get his wisdom from the teaching of Buddha or the teaching of Jesus? Buddha said: "To make an end of selfishness is happiness. This is the greatest happiness—to subdue the selfish thought of 'I.'" Jesus said, "If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily, and let him follow me."[2]

There was a Christian man whose motto was, "Myself third." God came first, and then his neighbor, and then himself. There was a woman of whom James Russell Lowell wrote,

> "So circled lives she with Love's holy light,
> That from the shade of self she walketh free."

It can be done. Paul says, "Love seeketh not her own." Love is unselfish and love "Aye tastes God's honey on his holy hill."

The old law said, "Thou shalt not covet; thou shalt not seek the things which belong to others." Paul says that the law of love sometimes is, "Thou shalt not seek what belongs to thyself; thou must be ready to surrender thy rights for others' good." Where legality ends, love begins. Love is ready for sacrifice. It is no sacrifice to give up sin, for sin is deadly and damnable. It is no sacrifice to give up a baleful disease, for that is destroying. Sacri-

[2] Luke 9. 23.

fice consists in giving up what is good and valuable and what we have earned and what it is right for us to have and to hold.

Does a statesman give up his well-earned leisure for the nation's good? It is his right to enjoy it, but he makes the sacrifice. Does a philanthropist give his hard-earned wealth to some benevolent enterprise? It may be his right to keep it, but love leads him to sacrifice. Does some kindly neighbor give up the ease and comfort of her own home to watch by night and to market and cook by day for the sick and helpless poor? There is no necessity laid upon her except the constraining power of love. The law of love is a higher law than the law of rights.

It is too high a law for the natural man to grasp it readily. There is a manuscript of this Epistle in the Vatican Library at Rome in which the scribe has inserted another "not" in this sentence. He was surprised to read here, "Love seeketh not her own," and he was sure there must be some mistake about that, and so he corrected the sentence to read, "Love seeketh not things not her own." That meant, "Love does not covet," and that went back to the standard of the Old Testament. Paul shows us a more excellent way, not the way of law but the way of love.

In California there was a little church of twelve members. It had been a flourishing charge with a membership of fifty or sixty; but that was some eight or ten years before. At that time it had in its congregation two superannuated preachers, members of the same Conference, who were nextdoor neighbors to each other. One of them had an orchard full of fruit trees, and a row of cherry trees next to his neighbor's fence. The other man, who happened to be on the eastern and sunny side, had a vegetable garden; and he planted a row of eucalyptus trees next to the dividing fence. The eucalyptus tree grows very rapidly, absorbs a great deal of moisture from the ground, and because of its height casts a rather long stretch of shade.

The preacher on the shady side of the fence soon found that his cherry trees did not grow well or produce well in the neighborhood of that row of the eucalypti; and he thought his neighbor ought to cut the trees down. He had a right to the sunshine above the ground and he had a right to the moisture which was beneath it, but those eucalyptus trees would send their roots under the fence beneath the ground and they shut off all the sunshine above it. On the other hand, the other preacher thought he had a perfect right to do

what he pleased on his own territory. He had his own perfectly good reasons for wanting that row of eucalyptus trees there, and he was satisfied with them; and if he was, everybody else ought to be. Each man had his rights, and each man felt justified in maintaining them; and there it was that trouble began.

The two neighbors quarreled, and then the whole neighborhood around them got to quarreling, and then the church took sides; and matters went on from bad to worse till they had a church trial. The trial did not mend matters in the least. It only intensified the feeling on both sides; and the final result was that the church went to pieces. About forty of the members went over into the Presbyterian Church. Others left the church altogether; and for years they had great difficulty in keeping up any organization. It was eight or ten years after the church trial when we first became acquainted with these people, and the eucalyptus trees had been cut down long before and their roots had rotted away in the ground; but nobody in that community had forgotten them. A high spite fence had been built between these two neighbors. There were only twelve members left in the church; but those twelve members were about equally divided, six of them on the one

side and six of them on the other side of that fence. If they ever peeped through the cracks at each other, it was only to see if the other folks were not some way or other invading their rights.

Both of those preachers were good men. They had both done good service in the church. Each of them had many good friends. They were good Americans too, and good lawyers; and they knew their rights and they were ready to maintain them. Many of us are like them. Many of our church-members are content to live on the plane of legality rather than in the experience of Pauline love. Two church-members in Kansas had a quarrel about a sheep. Each man was sure he was in the right of the matter; and they could not settle it between them and they carried it into the courts. It was a long and bitter contest, and it was appealed from court to court. Each man became more and more determined to have the right of the case win in the end, that he might be justified in the eyes of the whole community. They retained the best of legal ability, and kept the matter going for months and for years; and in the end it cost each of them something like five thousand dollars to determine to whom that sheep belonged. Possibly the sheep was worth ten dollars; but it

was worth ten thousand dollars to determine the rights in the case. They believed in peace with justice, peace won through litigation and fighting; and that meant that they had no peace at all.

These are extreme illustrations it may be, in the extent of the damage done, but the principle they illustrate is of very common occurrence. Somebody in the community has his feelings hurt, feels that he has been insulted or slighted or wronged in some way or another; and then for a year he will not speak to the offending party. He passes him coldly by on the street, and says, "He must apologize to me or make some reparation before I ever will consider him worth my notice," when he ought to go up to him and say, "We never ought to hate each other. Here is my hand; we are brethren, and we both expect to go to heaven."

II. Rights Sacrificed

Love will do that. If it be necessary to preserve peace of heart or peace of family, peace in the community or peace in the Church of God, love will be willing to forego its own preference, to surrender its own rights. Perfect love seeketh not its own honor first of all, and always; but it seeks God's honor first of

all, and always. With it the supreme desire is not to have its own rights; the supreme desire is that God may be glorified and his will may be done and his kingdom may come on this earth and his name be hallowed among men. If in any case to insist on our rights will clearly lead to lasting damage to the cause of the Christ, will hinder the spread of his kingdom and will bring dishonor upon his name, Love will be ready at once to say, "I love the Lord with all my heart and my neighbor as myself, and I am willing to surrender my selfish desires to their good."

Is not that what Paul intends to say here? Love seeks God's honor and the neighbor's salvation. Love will not seek its own interests in preference to these. Paul says: "It is good to have our own rights, but sometimes it may be better to surrender them. It may be legally right to maintain them, when it will be religiously right to let them go. The standard in our lives ought to be a loftier standard than the legal standard; it ought to be the regal standard of unselfish love to God and man."

Abraham had been called into the land of Canaan, and the Lord had promised it to him for his own inheritance. His nephew Lot journeyed with him for a time; but they had

so many flocks and herds and tents that it became difficult for them to find pasture ground in any one place sufficient for both of them. The herdmen of Lot quarreled with the herdmen of Abraham, and there was increasing friction and unpleasantness between them. Then Abraham said to Lot: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. It seems necessary now that we separate from each other. Let us divide the pasture lands not occupied by the Canaanites in some peaceable and satisfactory manner, that we may part from each other in good will."

Abraham might have said, "The Lord has promised me this land; and I think you ought to go down into Egypt or elsewhere, and leave me in undisturbed and undisputed possession." Possibly it might have been all right for him to say that; but Abraham was the friend of God, and his spirit was not of that selfish and arbitrary sort. Then, again, he might have said: "I am the uncle, I am the older, and I surely ought to have the preference in this matter. I will take the larger portion, or at least the better portion, and you ought to be satisfied with any share I am willing to leave you." We do not see how Lot

rightfully could have complained, if Abraham had said that; but Abraham was too nobly unselfish and loving to make any such proposition. He said to Lot, "Take your first choice; go where you please. I will be content with what is left for my portion."

Luther says that if Abraham had consulted a lawyer about that division of pasture, the lawyer would have told him, "Take your chance, and hold on to all the property you can." Many a modern church-member would have been disposed to say: "Abraham, you know little or nothing about this world or its ways. You never can trust that selfish young nephew. If you give him the chance, he will be sure to take all the fertile valley, all the plain of the Jordan which is like the garden of the Lord. The only way to get through this world is to stand up for your rights. If you do not do it, you will be cheated every time." Abraham consulted no lawyer, and he sought not his own. The friend of God had something of God's spirit of unselfish love. His one desire was that there might be peace among brethren, even at the cost of self-denial.

Lot looked out for his own interests, chose the fertile Jordan valley, pitched his tents toward Sodom and Gomorrah, afterward became rich enough to have a city residence and to be

a great man in the community; but then went through worse than a Yokohama conflagration, and lost nearly everything he had. Abraham sought not his own, but unselfishly surrendered his just rights; and God made that man his friend, made him the father of the faithful, gave him riches and honor and many an unexpected blessing.

Love seeketh not her own. Jonathan loved David as his own soul; and he gave to David his robe and his sword and his girdle in covenant sign that they should be as one. David grew in popularity with the people, and Saul was very jealous, thinking that David might aspire to be king; but Jonathan loved David and he envied him not and he sought not his own. He protected David from his father's attempts upon his life. He was loyal to David's interests always, and at last he gave up to him the throne. Love is capable of such self-sacrifice; and only that love is worthy of the name which is ready to prove itself in self-sacrifice of that sort.

Take the mother's love for an example. So many of the things which Paul says of love in this chapter are so clearly true of a mother's love. It is long-suffering and kind, not easily provoked. It thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things,

hopeth all things, endureth all things; and surely it is true of a mother that she seeketh not her own. The mother nourishes the little one, cares for it, guards it, watches it by night and day, devotes herself to it unceasingly till it has grown old enough to care in part for itself. Then she prays for it, works for it, saves for it, and sacrifices for it, that it may have food and clothing and schooling; and for many years she goes without many things that the child may have everything it needs.

Always unselfish and self-denying, sympathetic and kind, the mother's love always is true and always is to be relied upon. She loves because she must love; and if she consume her energies for a lifetime and receive in the end only ingratitude and selfish disregard of her own wishes and love, she loves on still. That is a mother's love; the love which seeks not her own but the child's good, the love which surrenders her own good to the good of the child.

That was the spirit of the apostle Paul. Have we ever noticed the difference between Saul and Paul in that regard? When his name was Saul he says of himself, "I went about to establish my own righteousness."[3] He was very religious at that time, but what

[3] Rom. 10. 3.

was the inspiring motive of all his religious observances? He was not so anxious about the kingdom of God, but he was seeking his own honor and his own exaltation; he was going about to establish his own righteousness. After his name had been changed to Paul there was an end to all self-seeking with him. He wrote to the Thessalonians, "Not of men sought we glory, neither of you nor yet of others; we were willing to have imparted unto you not the gospel of God only but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us."[4]

That is the apostle who wrote these words, "Love seeketh not its own." His own life is an illustration of its meaning. "For ye remember, brethren, our labor and travail, for laboring night and day because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God,"[5] and they did remember how this man with splendid abilities never had sought for his own advancement in the church or the nation. They remembered how this man who might have ranked high in the Sanhedrin or have attained high distinction in a professional career was content to work with his needle late into the

[4] 1 Thess. 2. 6, 8.

[5] 1 Thess. 2. 9.

nights, sewing upon the coarse tent material that he might have enough to live on while he preached the gospel through the day. They remembered how he had perseveringly sacrificed self because the souls of the brethren were unsaved and so dear. They remembered, and they believed Paul when he said, "My self is crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."[4]

Would our brethren believe that testimony from us? They will, if they have seen in our lives not self-seeking but self-sacrifice. Christ sought not his own. He left the throne of power and came to a birth in a manger and a death of shame. Had he sought his own, he never would have left heaven. Had he sought his own, he would have stepped down from the cross. If Christ so loved us, we ought even so to love the brethren.

[4] Gal. 2. 20.

CHAPTER VI

LOVE AND TEMPER

We said concerning the preceding clause, "Love seeketh not its own," that we considered it the most difficult statement we had found thus far in this chapter. We considered it difficult because it ran so exactly counter to all of our natural prejudices and our usual principles of action and life. The average American is ready to think that it is his first duty to stand up for his rights; and the most of us put in most of our time in seeking for, claiming, and demanding that which we consider our own. It was to be expected, therefore, that the sentiment to which the apostle there gave expression would not commend itself immediately to the average man. It would appeal only to Christians of mature spiritual experience.

We knew that the love which seeketh not its own would seem to many or most too visionary and impracticable, too unworldly ever to be exercised in the social and business relations of our ordinary life; but there was the truth as stated by the apostle Paul, the plain, straightforward, unqualified declaration that

love seeketh not its own. We tried to make it clear that while society and morality and the law courts of the land might be satisfied with the legal standard of perfect justice in the relations of life, the Christ would not be satisfied with that standard, and Christianity and the churches of the land never ought to be satisfied with anything less than the regal standard of perfect love. The essence of sin is selfishness; the essence of love is self-sacrifice. The man who loves the Lord with all his heart and his neighbor as himself will be ready to make any sacrifice which will glorify God and assist in the salvation of a neighbor's soul, will be ready even to surrender his own rights if in so doing he can forward higher interests like these. The man who seeks not his own in that sense will be the man who has made an entire consecration and enjoys full salvation and is unworldly in that he is Christ-like in daily conversation and life.

We believe that it is both expedient and right to present the truth in such a manner as will commend itself immediately to every man's conscience and judgment, if that be possible; but if for any reason that may seem an impossibility, we believe that the only duty is to present the truth at any rate; and that was about all we could do with that statement.

With what a sigh of relief we could have turned to Paul's next statement if we could only read it as it is in the King James version—"Love is not easily provoked." Everybody would agree at once that to be easily provoked, to fly all to pieces at the least provocation, is not becoming in any Christian and is an unlovely characteristic in any life. Every sinner will be ready to say, "A man ought to have some control of his temper, so as not easily to be irritated and provoked," and every church-member will be ready to assent: "Yes, we ought to control our tempers in some measure at least. Of course it is only natural that we should lose our tempers sometimes; everybody does that; but we ought not to be losing them continually, nor, indeed, very often. We ought to show that we are not easily provoked." Every one is ready to assert: "I am not easily provoked myself; but when I am, then it is time to look out. It will not be safe to get in my way until I cool down again." If that was all that Paul said here about Love, his statement would be acceptable to everybody.

I. A Mistranslation

However, Paul never said, "Love is not easily provoked." Our Authorized or King

James Version gives us an absolutely misleading translation of the Greek when it says that. The fact of the case is that that word "easily" has absolutely no right in a translation of Paul's statement. In the original Greek there are only two words, *οὐ παροξύνεται*, which might be rendered, "Love never has a paroxysm, a fit of temper." That was what Paul said, and nothing more than that.

The Vulgate put it, "*non irritatur*," "Love is not irritated," which was no better than the King James translation and just about as far from the truth. Luther translated, "*Sie lässet sich nicht erbittern*," "She does not allow herself to become embittered," and that was an improvement, since it stated the fact in the case, even if it was not exactly the fact stated by Paul. The Revised Versions correct the King James Version by omitting the word "easily" and giving us the mistranslation, "Love is not provoked," which is just as bad as the older version and which does not state the truth; for Love is provoked whenever adequate occasion arises, and it ought to be whenever outrage and injustice and cruelty furnish it ample reason for so being; but as Paul says, it ought not to be and it never is provoked into a paroxysm, a fit, loss of self-control. Love is provoked, but Love remains master of

itself under every provocation. Love may be angry, righteously angry, but it will be angry and sin not.

In what is possibly the oldest translation ever made into English, the translator rendered this clause, "Love is not stirred to wrath." The New Testaments printed in 1547, 1548, 1549, and 1566 all translated, "Love is not provoked to anger." These were mistranslations and mistruths. Then came the King James Version, inserting the word "easily" improperly and without any authority, and making it read, "Love is not easily provoked." The Coverdale, Matthews, Cranmer, and Geneva editions which followed corrected this mistranslation, as our own Revised Versions have done; but their translation misinterprets Paul, for he did not say that love was not easily provoked and he did not say that love never is provoked. He said that love never is provoked into a paroxysm, never permits itself to lose its self-control.

How did it happen that the word "easily" came into our English Bibles in the first place? John Wesley suggests that it may have been to excuse the apostle Paul himself; for we read in the book of Acts that he and Barnabas disagreed about a certain matter, and the Greek reads, *ἐγένετο δὲ παροξυσμός*, literally, "There was

a paroxysm, a fit of anger."[1] The word is the same which we find here; and if both of the apostles lost their temper and their self-control, then Paul's doctrine as expressed in this clause and his practice as narrated in the one instance at least in the book of Acts would be at variance with each other. John Wesley is inclined to think that it was Barnabas alone who had a fit of anger, and that Paul was not at fault at all in the matter and therefore needs no excuse.

Adam Clarke, on the other hand, just hints that the word "easily" might have been added by his Majesty himself; for King James might have thought that it would be so much more comfortable and acceptable to the majority of men if the passage should read, "Love is not easily provoked, but, of course, there are cases when it may be provoked, as we all know." If that be true, he should have remembered the statement there at the end of the book of Revelation which reads, "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the

[1] Acts 15. 39.

things which are written in this book."[2] That is as likely to be true of any other book in the canon as it is of the Apocalypse. Anyway, in the interests of truth and accuracy, that arbitrary addition of the word "easily" in our King James Version has been rightfully rejected by the translators of both earlier and later times. However, not much has been gained, if we still translate Paul into the statement of an untruth.

II. Paul's Meaning

Paul said, "Ἡ ἀγάπη οὐ παροξύνεται, Love is not provoked into a paroxysm, beyond its own self-control"; and that means that we cannot excuse any uncontrolled burst of passion in one who professes to have Christian love. Adam Clarke was right when he said, "When the man who possesses this love gives way to provocation, he loses the balance of his soul, and grieves the Spirit of God. In that instant he ceases from loving God with all his soul, mind, and strength; and surely if he gets embittered against his neighbor, he does not love him as himself." The devil is hate incarnate, and hell is hate on fire. Jesus was love incarnate, and heaven will be love entire.

[2] Rev. 22. 18, 19.

Paul asserts, as the ideal, the complete eradication of all unholy passions, all sinful tempers, all uncontrolled paroxysms of wrath from the soul; and he asserts the necessity of the complete elimination of any display of these things from the Christian's intercourse with other men. Only that life which blesses is itself blessed. When a man in a fit of anger makes the air about him blue with profanity and falls to cursing anything and everything within sight he is heaping up wrath against the day of wrath, for curses are like chickens and come home to roost. A curse sours in the mouth and festers in the heart and rots in the brain which forged it. Wherefore Jesus said to men, "Bless, and curse not."

There may be an honest difference of opinion, which may be entirely consistent with love. There may be a righteous indignation, which is but the expression of sincere though outraged love. There may be Christian rebuke, administered in a spirit of love. There is such a thing as holy wrath, which the apostle Paul attributes to God himself, though God is love. We read of the anger of the Lord in scores of passages in the Old Testament; and Paul tells us that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. "From this

notion of wrath, when it is applied to God, we must, of course, remove all that pollutes human wrath, personal resentment, the moral perturbation which gives to the manifestations of indignation the character of revenge. In God, who is the living Good, wrath appears as the holy disapprobation of evil and the firm resolve to destroy it." We may safely enough assert all of these things; and yet it remains true that all unholy passions, all sinful tempers, all uncontrolled bursts of rage are inconsistent with the profession of Christian love. Love never has a paroxysm of wrath.

The trouble about the paroxysm is that it means a loss of self-control, in which the higher self is dethroned and the lower self becomes dominant. He who indulges in a Berserker rage is blind to consequences and deaf to reason. He sees red for the time being and hears nothing but the roaring in his own ears. He runs amuck with absolute disregard to all restraints, social, civil, or religious. His evil passions are in control. They hold the reins and, like Jehu, they drive furiously. In a few minutes their reckless abandon may work irreparable havoc in the home or in the community. That paroxysm of the earth which we call an earthquake may last only a few minutes, but a whole city may be laid in

ruins by it. That paroxysm of the sky which we call a tornado may be gone in a little while, but a whole harvest may be devastated by it. A preacher's fit of temper may last only a few moments, but the ill-advised words spoken in that paroxysm of rage may nullify all good effects of his preaching for months and years to come.

Drummond said, "For embittering life, for breaking up communities, for destroying the most sacred relationships, for devastating homes, for withering up men and women, for taking the bloom of childhood, in short, for sheer, gratuitous, misery-producing power, this influence stands alone. . . . We are often inclined to look upon bad temper as a very harmless infirmity. We speak of it as being a mere infirmity of nature, not a thing to take into very serious account in estimating a man's character, a kind of accident, a matter of temperament, and so on. And yet right here, right in the middle of this analysis of love, Paul plants that thing; and the Bible again and again comes to that little infirmity, as we call it, and makes a good deal of it. It is not a little infirmity to smile at. . . . It is not to be looked upon as an accident of temperament; but it is a sin—one of the blackest of all the sins. It is the symptom of an

unloving nature at bottom; a want of patience, a want of kindness, a want of generosity, a want of humility, a want of courtesy, a want of unselfishness—all are symbolized in one flash of evil temper. It is the revelation of what is inside of a man, and therefore the man who has that must have his whole nature sweetened. It is not enough to deal with the temper. You must go to the root and sweeten the whole nature, and then temper will die away of itself."

We know that is true. We knew a mother who had as hasty a temper as any woman is likely to possess. She was a good mother always, but she naturally was so susceptible to any slight or insult, so quick to take offense, that we can remember the time when we used to see her face flush and her eyes flash in temper almost every day in the home, and there were times when she would sulk in moody wrath for days or weeks at a stretch. She took her temper before God; and his grace gave her the victory over it. For years before her death we never saw a trace of that old uncontrolled wrath. She had the same delicacy of susceptibility. She often had her feelings hurt. We have seen the tears in her eyes many times; but we never saw a flash of the old evil temper. The depths of her spirit were un-

ruffled to the very end. She would suffer long and be kind. The fruit of the spirit within her was gentleness, goodness, meekness, love, joy, peace. She naturally had as much temper as any woman we have intimately known. She had complete control over it in the experience of Christian love. We know that to be true, because we lived with her in the home.

God will help us to eradicate from our natures all that is contrary to the spirit of love. He can save us from evil tempers, and a salvation is not worth much which will not do that for us; and if we show that in the severest temptations our love is not provoked into uncontrolled anger, that will do more to bring the world to the feet of our Christ, more to bring all of our unconverted friends into the fold of the Lord than anything we can say and write on the subject.

CHAPTER VII

LOVE AND EVIL

PAUL says next about love that it οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν. A proper translation of these words will help us as much here as in the clause preceding.

I. THE PROPER TRANSLATION

We saw that in the preceding clause the translation, "Love is not easily provoked," toned down the apostle's meaning and totally misrepresented it by making it too mild; and the translation, "Love is not provoked," did not state the truth of the matter and did not state what Paul had said. Love is provoked, and rightly provoked, many a time, but it never is provoked into a paroxysm or loss of self-control. That is exactly what Paul said, οὐ παροξύνεται. In this next following clause, "Love thinketh no evil," is too sweeping a statement to be a truthful one, and it is not an accurate translation of Paul's words. It says more than Paul said or intended to say; and the value of his putting of the truth is lessened just as much by overstatement as by understatement.

Many people have read these words, "Love thinketh no evil," and have said at once: "That is impossible. That is impracticable. In a world like this, one must think evil of some things and of some people. Can I see a man indulging in every vice and not think evil of him? Can I see a woman traducing all her neighbors and not think evil of her? Can I see a nation selling its soul for commercial advantage and precipitating a war for conquest and aggression and not think evil of it? Can I see a church currying favor with the world by becoming jingoistic and militaristic and thus denying its Master the Prince of Peace and crucifying him afresh, and not think evil of it? If love thinks no evil, love must be blind to the facts; and if love is blind to the facts, love is merely a fool."

It may be a relief to people who feel like that to know that the apostle Paul never said, "Love thinketh no evil," but he said that Love *οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν*, does not take the evil for granted, does not reckon upon it without good and sufficient reason, does not begin with the supposition of evil but comes to the conclusion of evil only upon the basis of facts. That procedure will commend itself to most minds at once. It will seem both wise and religious.

II. Love Looks for Good

This is one of the most lovable characteristics of Love which Paul has put into this chapter. "Love does not reckon on evil, does not calculate that evil can be found if it be looked for long enough and diligently enough." On the contrary it is prone to see all the good which can be seen in everything. Love is gladdened by goodness. Love is no carping critic, no constitutional fault-finder. Love has no proclivities toward gossip and slander. Love is an optimist, always expecting the best possible under the circumstances, and always seeing something good even in seeming evil.

Love never calls sour sweet nor black white nor evil good. Love always is honest in dealing with itself and with others. It is just, but it is charitable as well. It never takes evil for granted without sufficient proof. It never supposes a bad motive when such is not clearly apparent. It never reasons out or infers anything to a neighbor's discredit. It never busies itself in imagining evil behind genuine good. That is what the apostle seems to intend when he says, "Love does not reckon on evil."

Then he may have had this added meaning

in mind. Love does not keep an account-book with a list of all the evils committed against it. It would have no use for such a list. It does not care to remember them. God is love, and God forgets! We are assured that Omniscient Love forgets our sins when we repent. It has been suggested that there is a morality of memory, and that a good memory is manifest quite as clearly in the things a man is able to forget as in the things he is able to remember. If a man forgets the wrong he does, that is the token of a sleepy conscience; but if he forgets the wrong done to him, that is the token of a large heart.

Possibly we can realize the lovableness of this characteristic best by looking at its opposite. There are those who seem to think only evil. They are not able to think any good of anybody or anything. They see spots on the sun. They would find blemishes on their mother's face, even if they had to take a microscope to assist them in the search. They have noses for nuisances, and no pleasant perfume ever seems to make any impression upon them. As one dog knows when another dog has been around and scents him from afar, as any beast smells out another of its kind, so only mean and worthless natures nose around to find out another's guilt and rejoice in it when found.

The rejoicing proves affinity with the deed, relationship with the doer.

Slanderers and gossips are foul-mouthed, for they eat dirt and that does not digest well in any man's stomach. They have eyes like an owl which is blind to all the sunlit features of the landscape, but sharp-sighted to see all which lies in the shadow. They seem to think that their superior clearness of vision is proved by their suspicion of hidden faults. They would mistrust the purest man who ever lived. They would find some sinister motive behind every righteous deed. They would slander a saint. They would crucify the Christ. In spite of all his purity and love they would call him a blasphemer and reviler and would be sure that he was possessed by Beelzebub. They would see only flaws and faults in his character. They would think only evil about him.

They seem made to believe in the bad. They are in every community; and the disciples of the Christ, like their Master, must endure their misconceptions and misrepresentations, their slanders and their lies. They are of their father, the devil; and like him they are the accusers of the brethren all the time. They are described in the book of Proverbs. They wink with their eyes. They speak with their

feet. They make signs with their fingers. Forwardness is in their heart. They sow discord. They "devise evil continually." That is exactly what Paul says Love does not do, *οὐ λογίζεται τὸ κακόν.*

III. Love Is No Slanderer

In the first chapter of the book of Job we are introduced to a scene in the courts of heaven. The sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. The Lord said unto Satan, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?"[1] Satan sneered and said, "He may be all that you say he is; but if so, he has very good reason to be. You have blessed him on every hand, and he serves you because you are good to him, and he finds that it pays him to do it; but if you take his blessings away from him, Job will curse you to your very face."

When Satan said that, he was a contemptible liar, the accuser of a just and righteous man. The possessions were swept away at a stroke, but Job did not curse God. He said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord

[1] Job 1. 8.

hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."[2]

In the twelfth chapter of the book of Revelation we are again introduced to a scene in the courts of heaven. John sees in prophetic vision the time when Satan is cast out, and then he hears a loud voice, saying in heaven, "Now is come salvation and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night."[3] That is the biblical conception of Satan's constant employment, slandering the saints before the throne on high; and that is the constant employment of his children here, slandering the saints everywhere in this world. The accuser of the brethren he is; the accusers of the brethren they are. It is devilish in him and it is devilish in them. To give no man credit for a word honestly spoken or a good deed unselfishly done is characteristic of the Father of lies; and that characteristic runs through the whole family.

The characteristic of love is the exact opposite of this. Love is no condor, looking only for carrion and feeding only on filth. The condor flies yonder at an incredible height,

[2] Job 1. 21.
[3] Rev. 12. 10.

five or six miles up in the air, and he sweeps on seemingly tireless wings here and there, and his telescopic vision takes in the whole land; but he always looks downward and he sees nothing of the beauties of the landscape and he cares nothing for the evidences of vigor and life anywhere. He sees that weakened member of the flock or the herd who staggers in the line or falls behind the rest and then lies down to die. He was but a speck there in the blue sky, but straight as an arrow he comes swiftly sweeping down upon the prey. Then out of the dim distance another speck appears, and from the opposite point of the compass another and another and yet another. Hoarsely screaming, they settle down upon the carcass, and rend the rough hide. They push with their feet and flap with their wings and with beak and claws they tear their repulsive repast. They gorge themselves until they are too heavy to rise any more on their wings. It is a picture of the condors of the Andes at their feast.

We know of nothing so revolting and disgusting as that; unless it be a gathering of gossips, an assembly of slanderers, who have scented some bit of delicious scandal and by some strange and inexplicable instinct have come together from the four points of the com-

pass to discuss it. They roll the salacious news as a sweet morsel under their tongue, they rend the reputation as, with coarse beak and claws, they gorge themselves in a perfect mass of corruption. A condor of the Andes is more worthy of respect than characters of that sort. Nothing is further removed from perfect love.

The dog which fetches will also carry. The talebearer who brings you a slander about your neighbor will carry on a slander about you to your neighbor. They used to say that a scandal-monger was as bad as a scandal-maker and it has been suggested that a tale-hearer is as bad as a talebearer and they both ought to be hanged, the one by the ear and the other by the tongue.

IV. Love Is Not Soured

It is one of the greatest mysteries imaginable that there are people who make a profession of the experience of perfect love, of which the apostle Paul says, "Love reckoneth not evil," and yet they are constitutional fault-finders and critics, dyspeptic pessimists of the most confirmed type, soured on the church and soured on humanity, at outs with the brethren and at outs with the race. You talk with them

for ten minutes and you will find that they are ready to accuse everybody and slander everything and blacken all reputations; and if you believe what they tell you, you must come to the conclusion that the church is a hive of hypocrites and all of its services smell of brimstone, and that the devil himself is in the pulpit and plenty of his imps are in the pews. The world outside is no better; it is a seething mass of corruption, hurtling headlong into hell.

We talked with a man of that stamp half an hour on the street corner. He has professed the experience of perfect love for many years; but listening to his conversation for that whole half hour, we were not able to discover the slightest trace of even the most imperfect love in a single word which he uttered. He was cranky and contrary, a spiritual pessimist, a dyspeptic in both stomach and soul. It was a fact that his breath was so bad that it soured the whole atmosphere for ten feet around him; and it was a fact that his spirit was as sour as his breath. We listened to him for that half hour, and we had our worst spell of the blues in six months. It was worse than the blues; it was the blackness of darkness which was settling down upon us. After half an hour of it we could

stand it no longer. We excused ourselves rather abruptly, and managed to get away from him around the corner; and when we had gotten half a block away we were astonished to find that the sun was still shining and the world was still just about as good as it ever had been.

We have been happier ever since we had that talk with that professed Christian and possessor of the experience of perfect love. We have been so profoundly thankful to God that we did not have to live with him, only talk to him occasionally for half an hour. For years that man has been the chief barrier in the community to everybody else who was seeking to know the heights of Christian love. They were so prone to say, "If that is the experience, Good Lord, deliver us from anything like it." That is not the experience. Tennyson's "Maud" was described as "dead perfection, nothing more." What she lacked was love. This perfection which is wholly lacking in love is a perfection not only dead but rotting.

The spirit of perfect love is the spirit of the Christ. We find that, talking to him for half an hour, we get our soul full of sunshine and full of peace. Love is long-suffering and kind, is not continuously provoked, and is not for-

ever thinking evil and finding fault. Love is no accuser and slanderer, no constitutional critic or theological pessimist. Love will call everything by its right name, will call a spade a spade, will recognize and rebuke evil whenever and wherever it may be present; but love will not be suspecting evil always. Its disposition will be neither suspicious nor uncharitable. We believe in a perfect love which sweetens the whole nature, instead of souring it. We believe that perfect love will be an optimist always, with sunny countenance and cheerful disposition and helpful presence everywhere.

There are professors of perfect love who are neither long-suffering nor kind. They are the first to get impatient, quick to see any fault, and unkind to remark it. There are professors of perfect love who are continually vaunting themselves, and are puffed up over their own profession. They spend all the time in praising God for their own goodness, and praying God for their own blessing, and finding fault with their brethren for not doing the same thing. There was a good old rabbi who had twelve sons; and in the watches of the night one of them woke him up to say, "Behold, my eleven brothers lie sleeping, and I am the only one who wakens to praise and pray." "Son,"

said the wise rabbi, "you had better be asleep too than to wake to censure your brothers."

Love vaunteth not itself, and love reckoneth no evil. There are professors of perfect love who are anything but courteous or considerate of other people's feelings and sensibilities, boorish and bearish and brutish in behavior and speech; but they are the devil's caricatures of a blessing divine. Their spirit is the exact opposite of the spirit of perfect love. Love doth not behave itself unseemly, is not prone to think evil. Love is gentle, peaceable, lovable, pure.

What shall we think about these pessimistic professing Christians? What did we think about that man with whom we talked on the street corner? We thought he was the best illustration we knew of that passage in the Sermon on the Mount in which the Lord said, "If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"[4] That is a very severe thing to say, but it seems the only proper thing to say.

We often have wondered what that passage could mean; how any light-bearing body possibly could send out anything else than rays of light; and we have tried to conceive of the light in the central sun suddenly transformed

[4] Matt. 6. 23.

into rays of darkness instead, and then vomited forth from that central sphere, rolling on and on through the whole heaven and round the whole earth, till the stars would be blotted out of the sky and the moon would be hidden and black: and then through the ether, in volumes of denser darkness, cloud upon cloud, pressing the worlds into deeper and yet deeper night, until the universe would be packed with such a pitch-black gloom as no eclipse and no midnight ever has suggested to men; and then that once light-giving sun continually belching its blackness everywhere, all the light that was in it transformed into opposite and infinite night—how great would that darkness be!

In the physical heavens that condition may never be seen; but Christian mythology declares that in the spiritual heaven that marvel was one time wrought. It tells us that a being stood near the very throne of God whose transcendent excellence gave him even in the glory of heaven the title of Light-bearer, Lucifer. It avers that the light which was in him was transformed into darkness, and he is no longer the light-bearer but the night-bringer instead. How great is his darkness no one can tell; but he is the prince of those wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness

forever, he emits error and blindness and darkness alone, he dwells in an outer darkness where there is and shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Now, we say solemnly that the nearest approach to these imaginations in present-day experience is to be found in the man who once enjoyed the baptism of perfect love but has allowed that experience to sour in his soul. All the light which was once in him has turned into darkness, a greater spiritual darkness than any other we know. He who falls from the highest height falls into the lowest depth. It takes an angel to make a devil. It takes the backslidden professor of perfect love to make the perfect Pharisee.

V. Love Sees the Lovable

We have looked at the contrast long enough. Love is everything which this contrast is not. Love is both blessed and a blessing. Jesus said in the beginning of that Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."[1] Here the apostle Paul tells us, "Blessed are those who have been perfected in love, for they shall see good wherever it is possible to see it." Love thinketh no evil where no evil seems. Love delights in

[1] Matt. 5. 8.

the good and rejoices in all which is noble and true. It was Emerson who said, "The light by which we see in this world comes out from the soul of the observer." If that soul, then, be filled with love, it will see everything in the light which love sheds upon it. Goethe has put the same truth more briefly still, "Each man sees what he carries in his heart." If a man, then, has a heart which is filled with love, he will see what is lovable, if it is possible to find it anywhere.

Haydon the painter met Jeffrey and Scott in Edinburgh in 1820, and he said of them afterward: "Jeffrey has a singular expression —poignant, bitter, piercing—as if his countenance never lighted up but at the perception of some weakness in human nature. Whatever you praise to Jeffrey, he directly chuckles out some error that you did not perceive. Whatever you praise to Scott, he joins heartily with yourself and directs your attention to some additional beauty." Sir Walter Scott must have been much the more lovable character of the two. John Morley, in his *Life of Gladstone*, says, "He has not been in public life all these years without rubbing shoulders with plenty of baseness on every scale, and plenty of pettiness in every hue, but he has always kept his eyes well above it. Never was

there a man more wholly free from the starch of the censor, more ready to make allowances, nor more indulgent even. He will not linger a minute longer than he must in the dingy places of life and character." Gladstone must have read and studied this chapter on love to good results in his life.

Frances Willard says that when she was a girl she took this verse for a motto:

> "I pray the prayer of Plato old,
> Oh, make me beautiful within,
> And may mine eyes the good behold
> In everything save sin."

They tell us that Queen Victoria gave some advice to a young girl, whose mother had recently died, and who was about to take her mother's place at the head of the household of her father, an ambassador to an Eastern court. The queen said: "I shall not advise you about this duty or that in detail. Knowledge will come with everyday requirements of the position. I wish you to carry with you one suggestion from me which I hope you will not forget. You will meet many people whom you will not understand, and many whom you will think that you cannot love. Bury the bad in people, and always seek for the good. Do this, and England will honor you as she honored your mother." It was the advice of Queen

Victoria; it is the advice of the King of kings. He would have us perfected in love, and then love in us would not always be looking for evil.

VI. Love Is Like Jesus

Jesus was given to us for the perfect example. "He saw in every human soul a majesty and beauty which was veiled to other eyes, whether it was the soul of a speechless child or of a learned rabbi, the soul of a loathsome leper or of a Roman ruler. He stood still before every human soul, and his loving eye pierced through all its repulsive or unseemly wrappings until he had found in it the breath of God. He sought in every man the image of God, and he discovered in lost and ruined humanity that center of his being, loved of God and redeemed of God, in need of rescue and capable of rescue. He saw every man in the light of the redeeming love of God; and he saw in him a brother."

The Jews thought that Jesus was not patriotic because he was not narrowly nationalistic in his sympathies. They said to him, "You are a Samaritan," simply because he was not anti-Samaritan in the same bitter spirit and to the same intense degree in which they were; just as some of the disciples of Jesus were

called "pro-German" simply because they refused to hate the Germans as some of their ecclesiastical brethren did in the time of the Great War. Jesus preached his gospel of love to the Samaritans and had a great winter revival among them and found them much more ready to receive his message than his own brethren among the Jews had been. He refused to call down fire from heaven to punish inhospitable Samaritans; and when he wanted an example of uncalculating goodness of heart and unalloyed kindliness of character for one of his parables he actually chose a good Samaritan to be the hero of his tale. It was as though a preacher should make a Turk his example of philanthropy for the world to-day.

No wonder that the Jews thought that Jesus was unpatriotic. He was, if patriotism and jingoism are synonymous. He was, if internationalism and patriotism are inconsistent. He was, if a genuine belief in the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man was impossible to a patriotic Jew. His sympathies took in all alike. He loved all men. Every man was his brother, for whom he would labor and suffer and die. He seemed to think that Christian love was more patriotic than nationalistic hate. He seemed to think that the temporal interests of each na-

tion were best preserved in service to the eternal interests of all.

That is the spirit of Jesus, the spirit of perfect love. The spirit of Jesus would drive out the spirit of gossiping and slander and spiritual pessimism and national jingoism, and it would bring in the spirit of international brotherhood in perfect love.

CHAPTER VIII

LOVE AND THE TRUTH

I. Wolfenbüttel and Lessing

Wolfenbüttel is a German town seven miles or so from Braunschweig. When we visited it, it had over thirteen thousand inhabitants, a ducal chateau, and an ancient mortuary chapel, and a seventeenth-century church, the Marienkirche, which was well worth seeing; but Wolfenbüttel was world-famous for its great library, and it was this library which led us to set aside one day for a visit to the town. It was one of the largest and most valuable collections of books and manuscripts on the continent of Europe. There was the famous portrait of Spinoza on the walls, and a portrait of Martin Luther by Cranach. Among the precious possessions of the library were Luther's inkstand and drinking glass; and most precious of all, Luther's own Bible, with annotations in his own handwriting around the margins of almost every page.

The Bible was under lock and key; and we could look at it only through a glass case. We usually were satisfied with the arrangements

which seemed proper to the museum and other authorities everywhere; but a great desire seized us to get Luther's Bible into our own hands. It seemed to us that to touch it would be a benediction, and that we would enjoy turning its leaves a little while and reading a few of Luther's own marginal notes, more than we would enjoy turning the leaves of any other book we ever had seen. It would be a memory for a lifetime. We tried to persuade the gruff old custodian to permit us to handle it; but we evidently were foreigners who could not be trusted, or the book was too precious to be touched by anyone, and he would not allow such a thing.

There were other relics and curiosities in the library with which they were not so careful. We turned one of the first geographical globes that was ever constructed, and saw the queerly outlined continents of that early medieval geography. We looked through black-letter volumes of the Dark Ages, and saw some of the most beautifully illuminated manuscripts and parchment volumes we have found anywhere. It was a rare treat even to look upon these treasures. We felt there in the Wolfenbüttel library something like Peter felt on the Mount of Transfiguration, as if we would like to build a tabernacle and abide.

We have been in royal and imperial palaces; but we never felt that we would care to stay there long. We have been on mountain top and ocean wave, and we have seen many beautiful sights and enjoyed them to the full; but we never stood on any spot anywhere where we felt we would like to live indefinitely, unless it was in such a library as they have there in Wolfenbüttel.

There were thousands of rare and ancient manuscripts, and many of them would have been more valuable than many diamonds to us; and there were hundreds of thousands of books, covering the whole period of literature from the earliest days of printing till now. It was a great storehouse of knowledge, a mine of literary wealth, an almost inexhaustible supply of known and recorded truth in almost every field of thought. To have access to it, to have the control of it, to be in any sense master of it, it would be worth while to build a tabernacle and abide.

This world-famous library has had a world-famous librarian. Lessing was in charge of it for years; and the historians have likened Lessing's influence in poetry and literary critique to Luther's influence in the realm of religious thought. What Wittenberg was to the Reformation, Wolfenbüttel was to the

literary Renaissance of the nation. It was among these books that Lessing wrote and thought. He was happy in his labor, ceaseless in his application, a student because he loved to study and because he could not live without it; and it was Lessing who made that famous statement, quoted so often since, "If God held all truth shut in his right hand, and in his left nothing but the restless instinct for truth, though with the condition of forever and forever erring, and should say to me, Choose! I would bow reverently to the left hand and say, Father, give! Pure truth is for thee alone."

That sentiment has been so universally applauded that there would seem to be something in it to recommend it to the universal heart. It is the expression of the humility which all great scholars have felt before the boundless possibilities of research and of knowledge on every hand; and it is the expression of the priceless pleasure the real student feels in the search for truth, whether that search be successful or not. Truth-seeking is a blessing in itself. It is the highest calling to which a man can dedicate his life. The money-makers and the fame-finders and the world-conquerors may be blessed in their way and in their measure; but the students, the

investigators, and the discoverers in a lifetime of toil satisfying the restless instinct after truth have a higher pleasure and know a deeper joy than these.

II. Truth Seekers

All hail to the great army of truth seekers everywhere. We see them peering among the stars of the sky and the flowers of the meadow; we see them hammering away among the stones and knocking at every open door which nature and the universe can furnish them. Some of these scientists may not agree with us in their conclusions, but they are equally earnest in their search for truth; and we wish them all Godspeed. They belong to the noblest army on earth. They are engaged in the highest work of which man has been made capable. They are on their pilgrimage way to the holy land of Truth. Like the crusaders of old their cry can be, "God wills it, God wills it!"

We see them searching all the books. We see them listening in all the halls of learning in all the lands. We see them marshaling before them all the great spirits of the earth and plying them with questions. Theirs is a lofty mission, to find the Holy Grail of truth, to overcome all obstacles and penetrate all

barriers until they reach the North Pole of truth, to uncover all the secrets of the universe and unfold all life's mysteries, to tear away all masks and all deceptions and disclose the very features of the face of truth, to storm Truth's kingdom from every avenue of approach on every side and take full possession of all its territory. It is the crusade of the centuries, the ceaseless mission of the noblest souls among men. God has planted within them the restless instinct for truth, and they seek after it for ever. All hail! Godspeed!

They are blessed in their searching, so blessed that Lessing said that if God held all truth in his right hand, and in his left nothing but the restless instinct for truth, he would choose the latter gift, that he might search forever, but when Lessing said that he was more of a student than a Christian, more of a philosopher than an apostle. He had lost sight of the end in his satisfaction with the means. He who seeks for the truth is blessed in his seeking, but if at the end of a lifetime of search he has found only error, he dies in disappointment and despair. If he is blessed who seeks for the truth, he is thrice blessed who finds it, and from the firm vantage ground of truth attained sends out his inquiries into the farther deep. If there be joy

in the sowing of the springtide, there is greater joy in the Thanksgiving season and the Harvest home.

Lessing would say, "Pure truth is for God alone;" and he seems to suggest that man never can attain unto it. Is this true? Are we doomed to search and never find? Are we to be knocking forever and yet never have the door opened unto us? Is Taine's picture of the university students of the Middle Ages to be true forever of the race? Taine tells us of the many thousands who thronged the university halls in the days of the great scholastics, and he says of them: "These young and valiant minds thought they had found the temple of truth; they rushed at it headlong, in legions, breaking in the doors, clambering over the walls, leaping into the interior, and so found themselves at the bottom of a moat. Three centuries of labor at the bottom of this black moat added not one idea to the human mind. They seemed to be marching, but they were merely marking time." Is that description to be the abiding description of the truth seekers of all time? Lessing would seem to say so.

Ancient heathenism always said so. It was a legend of antiquity that mortal man could not look upon the face of the Goddess of Truth,

and live. She was of necessity a veiled goddess, and man could have only some faint conception of her beauty as it might shine through the enshrouding veil.

Modern infidelity would say the same thing. Voltaire has written by way of confession his personal experience. He says: "I am ignorant how I was formed, and how I was born. I was perfectly ignorant for a quarter of my life, of the reasons of all that I saw, heard, and felt, and was a mere parrot, talking by rote in imitation of other parrots. When I looked about me and within me, I conceived that something existed from all eternity. Since there are beings actually existing, I concluded that there is some being necessary and necessarily eternal. Thus the first step which I took to extricate myself from my ignorance overpassed the limits of all ages—the boundaries of time. But when I was desirous of proceeding in this infinite career, I could neither perceive a single path, nor clearly distinguish a single object; and from the flight which I took to contemplate eternity, I have fallen back into the abyss of my original ignorance." There at the bottom of that black moat, in the abyss of his original ignorance, Voltaire lived and died; a man with a restless instinct for truth and cease-

lessly searching after it, but forever erring in his search and finding instead of truth only his infinite ignorance.

Hume has given us a like testimony: "I seem affrighted and confounded with the solitude in which I am placed by my philosophy. When I look abroad, on every side I see dispute, contradiction, and distraction. When I turn my eyes inward, I find nothing but doubt and ignorance. I am confounded with questions. I begin to fancy myself in a very deplorable condition, environed with darkness on every side." He was a truth seeker, but without a sight of soul-satisfying truth.

III. Truth Finders

Can truth, then, never be found? We have heard the answer of ancient heathenism and of modern infidelity, and the answer of the German critic and philosopher. Let us turn now to the Word of God, and hear its answer too. Paul writes to Timothy, "God will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." He would not have them forever searching unsuccessfully; he would have them finally and forever attain to the knowledge of the truth. To that end he incarnated Truth Divine; and sent it in the person of his

Son as a full and free revelation to all men. That is the message of the Gospels, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us—and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father—full of grace and full of truth."[1] The ancient fable was disproved; for men looked upon the Truth and did not die, for he had come that they might have life and have it more abundantly.

The Truth had descended to earth; and he stood in the midst of world history with the declaration, "I am the way, I am the Truth, I am the life;"[2] and men looked upon the Truth and lived. John wrote in his Epistle, "We know that the Son of God is come and has given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.[3] . . . Hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."[4] Heart assurance instead of infidel ignorance! Here is no veiled divinity before which man as in heathen superstition must forever blindly bow. Jesus stood in the midst of men, saying to them in all simplicity of promise and omnipo-

[1] John 1. 14.
[2] John 14. 6.
[3] 1 John 5. 20.
[4] 1 John 3. 20.

tence of power: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. There shall be the blessedness of searching after truth, and the threefold blessedness of finding it as well."

Paul recognizes that possibility; and he adds another crowning attribute to his description of Christian love. Love is eager for the truth, searching ceaselessly after it, rejoices without measure in it when it is found, accepts it without hesitation, is devoted to it in every form. Like that man of the parable who found a treasure hid in a field, and for joy thereof went and sold all that he had and bought that field, love seeks for the truth as a pearl of great price, a treasure hid but incomparable; and love finds it at last, and prizes it so highly that all else would be sacrificed if need be to preserve its possession. Love rejoices in the truth, is not willing to let it slip by any means, for any cause. Love values the truth too highly for that.

IV. Truth Rejecters

That is not true of all men. When the Truth incarnated in Jesus was present among men, many of them refused to believe and receive him. Instead of rejoicing in the truth

they refused to accept it. One of those closing scenes in the life of Jesus when he stood in Pilate's judgment hall has been called the scene of "the great refusal." Pilate asked "Art thou a king?" and Jesus answered: "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one who is of the truth heareth my voice." Then Pilate said, "What is truth?" and without waiting for an answer went away. Jesus was a King, the King of truth. He stood at the head of a kingdom, the kingdom of truth. Pilate knocked for entrance at the door of this kingdom and then went away before anyone could answer the knock. He had the opportunity to know the truth and to be numbered among the possessors of the truth; but he slighted the opportunity and he neglected and rejected the privilege. It was the great refusal of his as of any man's life.

That was one of the most dramatic scenes in the New Testament history. Jesus stood there, the King of truth; no such King as the Jews had desired him to be, no such King as the Romans had any reason to fear, but the King of truth. Pilate stood before him, attracted by him, believing in his innocence, con-

scious of his dignity and power; and Pilate heard him say, "I am the king of truth;" but Pilate was a politician, anxious to preserve his position, and outside yonder were the influential enemies of the Christ at the head of a raging mob. If he did not yield to their wishes, they would complain to Cæsar and his position would become a precarious one; and what would all his friends say if he should be deposed? How his enemies would rejoice if he should be sent into exile! "Which will it be, Pilate? will you stand with the people who are in power and thus preserve your social position and your political preferment, or will you stand with this King of truth, though you should stand alone?"

Pilate said, "What is truth? I used to think when I was a young man that I would seek for the truth and never rest till I found it; and then I would rejoice in it, confess it, love it, die for it if need be; and I would consider that the noblest calling and the grandest pursuit in life. However, I have seen a hero die with this despairing cry upon his lips; 'O Virtue, I believed that thou wert, but now I see that thou art a mere shadow!' And I have heard the philosophers teaching in their schools, 'Doubt everything; only this one thing is certain—that nothing is certain.' Then

what is truth and who can show us the truth? The Stoics tell us that the best thing which is given to man is the power to take his own life; and the Epicureans tell us, 'Eat, drink, and be merry; for that which the senses enjoy is all that you really possess.' What admiration for truth philosophical doubt has left in my heart, Epicurean lust long ago has smothered under its silky folds; and the dried-out remnant of love for the pure and the good it left in me, the pursuit of politics and the lust of position strangled long since. It has led me step by step here to Jerusalem, here to this judgment seat, here before this man who maintains that there is such a thing as truth, and that he is the King of the truth; and he says, 'Every one who is of the truth heareth my voice.' Shall I listen to him? No; if he should persuade me, I would lose my position and then what would people say?" Pilate rose from his judgment seat and hastened away, fleeing like the coward that he was, turning his back upon the truth, and in that great refusal committing spiritual suicide, regicide, deicide, murdering the King of truth upon the cross.

The spirit of Pilate still is alive in this world. There are men to-day who have gone through the schools and have come out of

them doubting the existence of truth anywhere. There are other men who have deadened their consciences in the pursuit of pleasure and the lust for power. There are other men who are ready to say, "There are so many different religious systems in the world, and within each of these systems there are so many different sects, and within each of the sects there are so many different presentations of their creed; and where so many opinions are intermingled in inextricable confusion like snowflakes driven between opposing winds, how can one decide between them, how can anyone tell us what truth is?" There are other men who are asking themselves, "If I should join the church, how would it affect my social or political position; and if I should become converted, what would people say?" The spirit of Pilate still lives in the world, the spirit of the skeptic and coward.

The mob still cries for the crucifixion of the Christ. Many of the influential members of society do not believe in him and are opposed to him still. He stands before each man and asks him to judge his claims to be the King of truth, to listen to his voice and believe. If any man refuses to hear, Jesus sits upon the judgment seat and pronounces sentence: "Ye would not come to the light, because your

deeds were evil. Ye refused to rejoice in the truth, ye have preferred to risk adherence to a lie. The kingdoms of this world can control only the bodies of their subjects; but my kingdom is not of this world; my kingdom is a spiritual kingdom, and it reaches and rules the soul. The earth kingdoms count their subjects as so many heads; but in my kingdom nothing will count but consciences clean in the sight of God and man. Here good and evil are mingled together, but in my kingdom only spotless priests are citizens and kings. Here might makes right, but in my kingdom only love can dwell and rule."

Let love rejoice in this kingdom of the truth; for it will outlast all other kingdoms. It will be the eternal kingdom in the city of our God. Paul says that love will do nothing else. "Love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth."

Does anybody ever rejoice in iniquity? Rejoicing in iniquity is worse than committing it. Yet there are those who not only sin but boast of their sins. When Paul would draw his blackest picture of the vices of the Gentile world, he climaxes the awful description with a list of revolting crimes and then adds that the Gentiles not only do all these things but they give their sanction and approval to those

who practice them.[5] They not only do unrighteous things, but they rejoice in them. Paul says here that love will negative that entire description. It will neither sanction nor approve nor consent to any form of unrighteousness. It will condemn all such things, and forbid them as far as possible.

The negative and the positive assertions are joined in this sentence. Love rejoiceth not in iniquity of any kind; that is the negative statement. Love rejoiceth in the truth; that is the positive assertion. There are those who rejoice in a lie. When Jesus would utter his most sweeping condemnation of the unbelieving Jews, he said to them: "Ye do the things which ye heard from your father. Ye are of your father, the devil. He standeth not in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father thereof."[6] In the closing book of our canon, the book of Revelation, there are two pictures given us. In the one we see a countless host of the white-robed before the throne, and we hear their songs of praise resounding through all the courts of heaven. It is the song of love, redeemed and purified, and rejoicing in the truth for ever-

[5] Rom. 1. 32.

[6] John 8. 38, 44.

more. At the walls of the city we listen; and outside there is the sound of barking and wailing and shrieking and cursing, a discord of passion and pain. Then John tells us, "Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."[7] Paul declares that love will represent the antipode of these descriptions by Jesus and John. It stands in the truth. It loves the truth. It does the truth. It rejoices in the truth.

> "Love bids touch truth, endure truth, and embrace
> Truth, though, embracing truth, love crush itself.
> 'Worship not me, but God!' the angels urge:
> That is love's grandeur."

It will make any sacrifice for the truth.

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[7] Rev. 22. 15.

CHAPTER IX

THE CLIMAXING RÉSUMÉ

1. "Love Beareth All Things"

Fénelon said, "In order to be satisfied even with the best people we need to be content with little and to bear a great deal. Even the most perfect people have many imperfections, and we ourselves have no fewer. Our faults combined with theirs make mutual toleration a difficult matter, but we can fulfill the law of Christ only by bearing one another's burdens. There must be a mutual, loving forbearance." Love bears with its neighbors, finds excuses for their shortcomings, throws a mantle of charity over their faults, is ready to make the best possible out of any dubious transaction, and is eager to give credit to good motives everywhere. It is, as Lowell says,

> "A love that gives and takes, that seeth faults
> Not with flaw-seeking eyes, like needle-points,
> But loving-kindly, ever looks them down
> With the o'er-coming faith that still forgives."

Love bears up under any burden. Samuel Rutherford was in prison for fidelity to his

faith when he wrote: "What power and strength are in His love! I am persuaded it can climb a sweet hill, with hell upon its back; and swim through water and not drown; and sing in the fire and find no pain; and triumph in losses, prisons, sorrows, exile, disgrace; and laugh and rejoice in death." It was said long ago, "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." Love comes out dry, or at least alive and breathing. Love beareth the seemingly unbearable.

II. "Love Believeth All Things"

It is not a dupe, but it has boundless faith. It is shrewd but not suspicious. It believes in God and in all things God has made. With George Müller it is ready to say, "To those who love God, out of a thousand troubles nine hundred and ninety-nine work together for good—*and one more.*" It rejoices in trial. It is of good cheer in the midst of persecution. When faith has won the victory love makes it more than conqueror.

It sees good in everything. Lowell has sung love's insight well in these words:

"Love is blind but with the fleshly eye,
That so its inner sight may be more clear;
And outward shows of beauty only so
Are needful at the first, as is a hand

To guide and uphold an infant's steps;
Fine natures need them not: their earnest look
Pierces the body's mask of thin disguise,
And beauty ever is to them revealed
Behind the unshapeliest, meanest lump of clay,
With arms outstretched, and eager face ablaze—
Yearning to be but understood and loved."

Edmund Spenser had expressed the same truth long before:

"For lovers' eyes more sharply sighted bee
Than other men's, and in deare love's delight
See more than any other eyes can see,
Through mutuall receipt of beames bright,
Which carry privie message to the spright;
And to their eyes that inmost faire display,
As plaine as light discovers dawning day."

Love understands and loves. It recognizes the Divine in every man. It believes all things to be possible to one made in the image of God. It despairs of no man's reputation. It will not limit the possibilities of any man's regeneration. It has boundless faith in God, and that leads to limitless faith in men. Like Jesus, it would despair of no man. It would rather be deceived and disappointed in some than to be distrustful and suspicious of all. Even in a Judas it will see the possibility of a saint. It will befriend the publicans and sinners because even in their drunkenness and harlotry it will forecast their soberness and their exceeding love. As Tennyson said,

"In Love, if love be love, if love be ours—
Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal powers;
Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.
It is the little rift within the lute
That by and by will make the music mute,
And, ever widening, slowly silence all."

Perfect love has perfect faith. Love believeth all things.

III. "Love Hopeth All Things"

When disappointed in actual facts, when faced with man's failure to meet the requirements of God's law, when forced to acknowledge that man has fallen short of the glory of God's ideal for him, love's faith becomes boundless hope for the sinner's recovery and a limitless aspiration for the world's regeneration. He who believes all things to be possible to one made in the image of God will hope all things in regard to the realization of these possibilities. In its brother's present defeat love hopes for future victory. It forgives seventy times seven, because it believes in the ultimate triumph of the right and the good. This faith abides without breaking. This hope lasts to the very end.

Love looks to the time when there will be no far countries given over to riotous and rebellious living, but all lands will be subject to the one righteous and loving King. With

Brother Lawrence love learns "that all things are possible to him who believes; that they are less difficult to him who hopes; that they are more easy to him who loves, and still more easy to him who perseveres in the practice of these three virtues." Christianity is the religion of the Great Hope. It preaches the possibility of repentance and regeneration to all. It believes that no individual is irredeemably depraved. It hopes that all nations will be won to its Lord.

Its God is the God of hope. Its gospel is the gospel of hope. What faith believes, hope expects and receives. Faith says, "God can." Hope says: "I believe he will. I anticipate the answer to my prayer and my desire." Henry Drummond was a good example of Christian love. His biographer says of him, "He was always hopeful about the most hopeless, picked out some good points in the worst, and sent a man away feeling that he was trusted once more, not only by this friend, but by Christ, by God."

IV. "Love Endureth All Things"

The psalmist prayed for his enemies, but he did not pray that they might be saved. He prayed that their teeth might be broken and

that their little ones might be dashed against a stone. Those retaliatory petitions in what we call the imprecatory psalms mark the Old Testament antithesis to the New Testament doctrine and experience of Christian love. When Jesus was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not. He endured all things patiently, committing himself to Him who judgeth righteously. He was tried and harassed; but he never became moody or cynical, and he never doubted or despaired. Having loved his own, he loved them even when they deserted him at the end. Having loved the world, he loved it even while it nailed him to the cross. He endured with patience and he loved with a radiance which made his life the supreme manifestation of the divine.

It was in this patient suffering that Peter says he left us an example, that we should follow his steps.[1] Following in his steps, Christian love will triumph everywhere, until the Californian loves the Japanese, and the Frenchman loves the German, and the Irishman loves the Englishman, and the poor love the rich, and all the oppressed and the suffering classes in their enduring love have possessed their own souls and won their enemies

[1] 1 Pet. 2. 21.

to their all-conquering faith. It is the task which the Holy Spirit has set before himself in this world, a task which will be complete when the love which endures all things has become the characteristic of all Christians, even as it was of the Christ.

PART THREE

IN THE HEIGHTS

IN THE HEIGHTS

I. Is This Poetic Hyperbole or Possible Experience?

A recent writer has said: "This chapter is a jewel of literature, set with diamond thoughts. It has rhythm and splendor, climax and poetry, antithesis and hyperbole." We object to the last word of this statement. Paul is not setting forth a poetic fancy in this chapter. He is not allowing himself to be carried away by his enthusiasm. He is not picturing an impossible ideal. He is not hyperbolical in his description. He is putting before the Corinthians the supreme standard of excellence. He presents it as the ultimate object of attainment. It is not comparative but superlative in character. It is not "a more excellent way." It is the most excellent, the superexcellent, the supreme. Paul regards this as the best conceivable state of Christian grace which he could promise to Christian effort and present as a possible achievement through faith and prayer.

There is no hint either in the passage itself or in the context that Paul intends his poetry

to pass into hyperbole. He puts down nothing which is merely fanciful, purely imaginative, and clearly beyond realization. This ideal experience was to be put into practice in Corinth; and if there, it surely is attainable anywhere else. Corinth consecrated sensuality. It was the center of the worship of Aphrodite, the lowest form of desecrated love. Corinth needed this Epistle, and this chapter in the Epistle, to make clear to the Corinthians what love could be and should be. If "he who dwells within the purview of Calvary can be victorious even within the purlieus of Corinth," it will be possible in any environment. Martineau was right when he said, "Of nothing may we be more sure than this—that if we cannot sanctify our present lot, we could sanctify no other. Our heaven and our Almighty Father are there, or nowhere." All things are possible to faith. Love can be lived in any place. Lowell says:

"Love is a thing to walk with hand-in-hand
Through the every-dayness of this work-day world, . . .
A simple, fireside thing, whose quiet smile
Can warm earth's poorest hovel to a home."

Paul would have this love at home in every heart, in every hovel and every palace, in every nation and in all the world. This is possible because, as Longfellow told us,

"It is the heart, and not the brain,
That to the highest doth attain;
And he who followeth Love's behest
Far excelleth all the rest."

This is Paul's prescription for all the spiritual ills represented in the Church of Christ. It was to be tested and proved in immediate use and in continuous cherishing. Did anyone ever present all these characteristics in full measure? Yes, we already have said that we have in them a perfect picture of Jesus; and the Christian is to be like him, walking even as he walked.

Jesus said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you."[1] It may seem impossible at first thought.

"Love as He loved! How can we soar so high?
He can add wings, when He commands to fly.
Nor should we be with this command dismayed;
He that example gives, will give His aid."

Jesus showed that human nature could contain enough of the Divine to realize these characteristics of love in a human life. In our measure we are to realize them too.

II. The Two Paths

John Wesley has a sermon on "The More Excellent Way," and in it he says: "From

[1] John 13. 34.

long experience and observation I am inclined to think that whoever finds redemption in the blood of Jesus, whoever is justified, has then the choice of walking in a higher or a lower path. I believe the Holy Spirit at that time sets before him the more excellent way, and incites him to walk therein; to choose the narrowest path in the narrow way; to aspire after the heights and the depths of holiness—after the entire image of God. But if he does not accept this offer, he insensibly declines into the lower order of Christians."

To those on the lower planes this description will seem like hyperbole, while to those in the heights it will be a possibility. That suggests the figure with which our study began. We said that this chapter represented the highest peak in the Pauline Epistles, and that the experience presented here was the highest height to which even his daring spirit ever climbed. We say that it is possible of achievement but we do not say that it is easy to attain.

III. The Great Trial

It is like climbing to a mountain summit. A mountain trail is a great trial; a trial of endurance, a trial of patience, a trial of faith. It is a trial of muscle and soul, a trial of

heart and lungs and nerves, a trial of weary feet and dizzy head, a trial of the whole man, determining his whole worth. One must climb up and up, though the heart flutter with fatigue, though the eyesight grow dim from the overexertion; up and up, though the path is stonier and all verdure fails, though trees and shrubs are left behind and there is no longer any hope of a draught from a wayside spring, though there is nothing in prospect but a rocky waste until the summit is reached; up and up, though it is weary climbing: it is the only way into the heights.

"Then life is—to wake not sleep,
Rise and not rest, but press
From earth's level where blindly creep
Things perfected, more or less,
To the heaven's height, far and steep.

"Where, amid what strifes and storms
May wait the adventurous quest,
Power is Love—transports, transforms
Who aspired from worst to best,
Sought the soul's world, spurned the worms."

There are many Christians who are willing to follow the Lord through green pastures and by still waters, but who fail in courage and strength to follow him when he leads them into the heights. Yet he always is doing that with his disciples. Jesus did it with the Twelve again and again. When he wished to flee from

the multitudes into the very presence of God he went up into the mountains to pray. It was almost as though he seemed to think that God would be nearer to him there. When the time had come for him to be transfigured he took his chosen three apart with him into a mountain top, and there it was that the glory of God was revealed to him and to them. When the time had come for his ascension to the Father's throne he appointed a mountain top as the last meeting place with the apostolic band; and from that mountain top of Olivet he went straight into the skies.

It was on some commanding altitude that he preached the marvelous Sermon on the Mount. If any Christian never has had the Master deal with him as he dealt with his disciples in that searching sermon; if any Christian has gone for years and years without any transfiguration and ascension experiences, it has been because he was unwilling to climb; for these experiences are given only to those who have gone upward and on and on to meet with the Master on the heights.

The Lord's elect climb into the heights with him. They gird themselves for any sacrifice of strength and time which may be necessary; and they climb Mount Tabor and Mount Carmel and Mount Hermon and Mount Nebo

and Mount Olivet and Mount Calvary; up and up, though the path be stony oftentimes and it be weary climbing. That is the way into the heights, and the Lord meets them on the mountain top; and they see him as he is, and they become like him in all the characteristics of his love. On the highest summit the vision is clearest, and God and heaven are nearest; and they find rich reward. They can bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, endure all things in that Presence. Their love never will fail.

The always aspiring disciple will feel like that saint who said: "For many a day I have not seen the top of the mount. I have stood on the plain, or I have gone to the first cleft, or have tried a short way up the steep. I have not risen above the smoke of my own house, or the noise of my daily business. I have said: 'In my climbing I must not lose sight of my family; I must be within call of my children; I must not go beyond the line of vegetation; even in religion I must be prudent.' Thus I have not seen the top, nor have I entered into the secret place of the Most High. O that I might urge my way to the very top of the hill chosen of God! The wind will be music. The clouds will be as the dust of my feet. Earth and time will be seen as they are, in their

littleness and their meanness. My soul, move up to the very top; let no stone be above thee; higher and higher; God awaits thee, God calls thee, God will give thee rest! This day I will see the sacred top. The enemy will try to turn me back, but I will meet him in the strength of God, and abash him by the name of Christ. Lord, help me this day to see the very top of the mount, and let my poor soul taste the sweetness of the liberty which is assured to it in Christ." This is the aspiration which finally reaches the goal.

Our treatment of this chapter has been all too inadequate. We may have had many things to say as we climbed the heights, but now that we have reached the summit we are stricken with silence. The outlook is too sublime to be put into words. The horizon is too far-reaching to be compassed by any phrases at our command. We only look, and love.

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